S
333.784
F2sstd
1996
Montana. Dept. of
Fish, Wildlife,
and Parks. Region
Seventeen mile/
east fork, Spread/
Pete Creek, Keeler
Creek snowmobile

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and Parks. Region
Seventeen mile/
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Pete Creek, Keeler
Creek snowmobile

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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SEVENTEEN MILE / EAST FORK

SPREAD / PETE CREEK

KEELER CREEK

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
OCTOBER 1996

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INTRODUCTION

The Programmatic Environmental Review Program dated September 1993, lists in appendix A, proposed projects which may be categorically excluded from the environmental review process. If a project satisfies number 1 below, the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion.

1. Continuation of an existing program with no on-ground changes and that has previously satisfied MEPA reviews.

Projects that do not satisfy number 1, but do satisfy numbers 2 through 7, qualify for a categorical exclusion.

2. Snowmobile trail on federal lands is already incorporated in U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management travel plan and Multi-Party Agreement has been signed.

3. Fish, Wildlife and Parks wildlife clearance has been obtained.

4. Snowmobile Project Agreement has been signed by sponsor and Department.

5. Project is on an existing roadway or previously ungroomed snowmobile trail.

6. Development or improvements on federal lands have already satisfied NEPA, or state lands have already satisfied MEPA, or development and improvements are upgrades or repairs of existing facilities or structures which do not require any onground changes.

7. Trail is not a wilderness study area or designated nonmotorized area.

If the proposed project does not meet the requirements necessary for a categorical exclusion, it must be reviewed in accordance with the Environmental Review Criteria.

The project does not meet numbers 1 and 6, and therefore, does not qualify for a categorical exclusion.

DRAFT

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MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action** To provide funding for grooming several Kootenai Snow Trails on Kootenai National Forest lands in Lincoln county, Northwestern Montana.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 752-5501

3. **Name of Project** Kootenai Snow Trails

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)** Lincoln County Sno-Kats, P. O. Box 1180, Libby, MT 59923 (406) 293-8142, (406) 293-5458

5. **If Applicable:**

   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date Trail grooming
   Estimated Completion Date N/A
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete) N/A

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)** Lincoln County, T62, 63, 64N., R19, 30, 31, 32, 33W

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

(a)	Developed:	(d)	Floodplain . . . . . x acres
	residential . . . . . x acres		
	industrial . . . . . x acres	(e)	Productive:
			irrigated cropland . . . . . __ acres
(b)	Open Space/Woodlands/		dry cropland . . . . . x acres
	Recreation . . . . . x acres		forestry . . . . . *215 acres
			rangeland . . . . . x acres
(c)	Wetlands/Riparian		other . . . . . x acres
	Areas . . . . . x acres		

*Groomed trails located on approximately 175 miles of existing roads.

8. **Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

Rev. 3/93

9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

With the improvement of the over-the-snow machine "Snowmobile", the winter sport exploded in the 1960s. Because of the concern for public safety on public lands, the Kootenai National Forest personnel met with interested local snowmobilers to develop a place for a safe and efficient snowmobile trail program. The Lincoln County Sno-Kats was founded in 1969, trails were established and with the assistance from the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, a trail grooming program was set up on the Kootenai National Forest.

This report addresses only those established and programmed groomed trails shown in the preferred alternative of this report. It does not reflect any action on trails shown on maps prepared by others or outdated maps printed prior to this report.

A Multi-Party Agreement was signed in 1969 with the snowmobile trails established on existing roads and trails. The present updated agreement took effect on October 26, 1994 (Appendix A).

Funding for the grooming of the trails comes from taxes and license fees from snowmobile and snowmobile related accessories. In order to continue receiving these funds from FWP, an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be completed prior to the 1996-97 operating season.

With the assistance of a consultant, club members developed four alternatives (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 3a):

Alternative #1 - No Action (No Trails)

Financing from FWP would cease. Trail grooming would no longer take place. Roads in the area would continue to be used by snowmobilers. Safety to all users would suffer, particularly in the snowslide area. Major accidents could occur. Control of users in critical wildlife areas may be limited. Unmaintained trailhead areas may create unsatisfactory traffic conditions.

Alternative #2 - Retain existing groomed trail systems, Figures 1, 2, and existing trail on Fig 3.

Grooming would continue over the existing route which has been used throughout the years. Financing from FWP would

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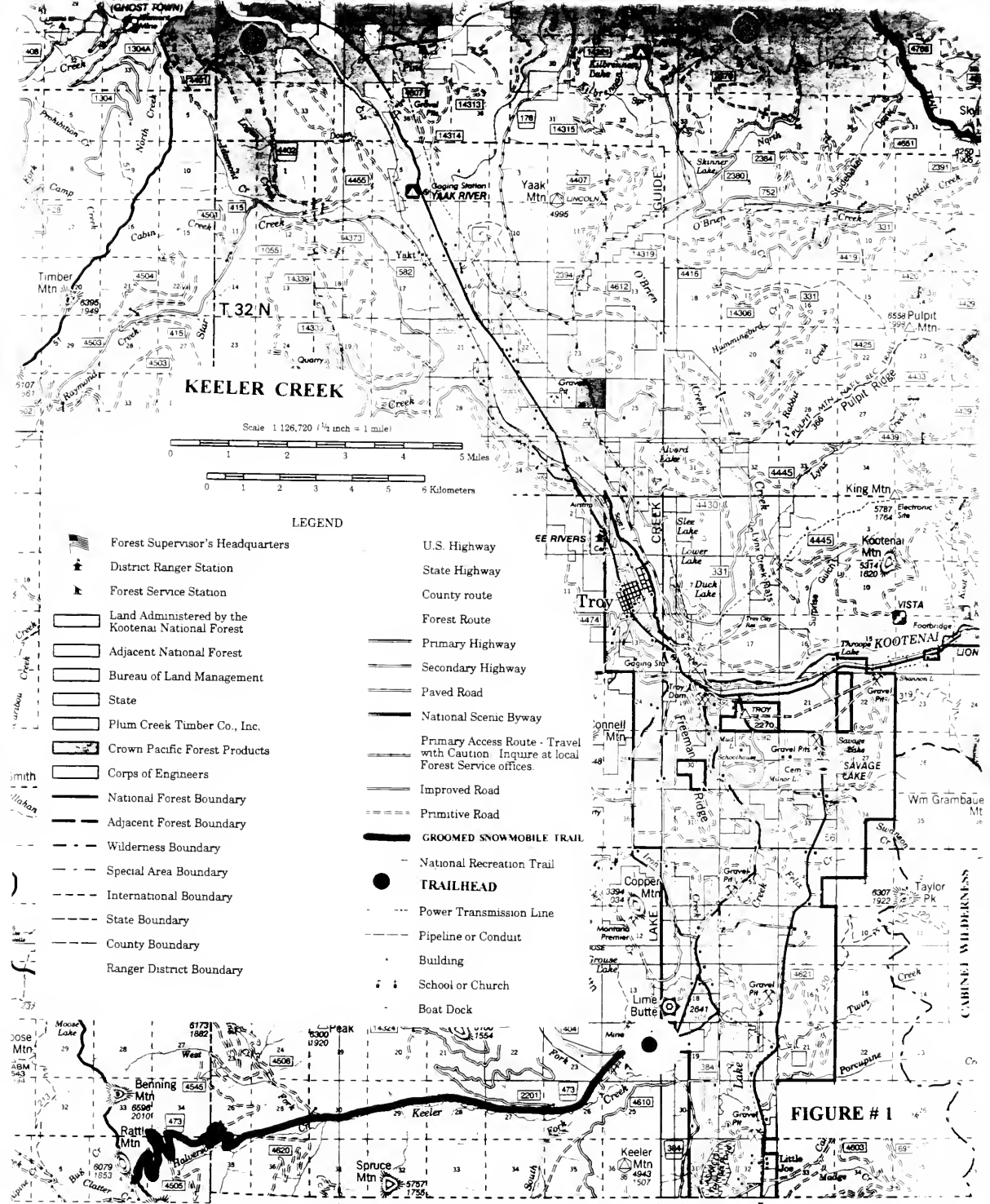
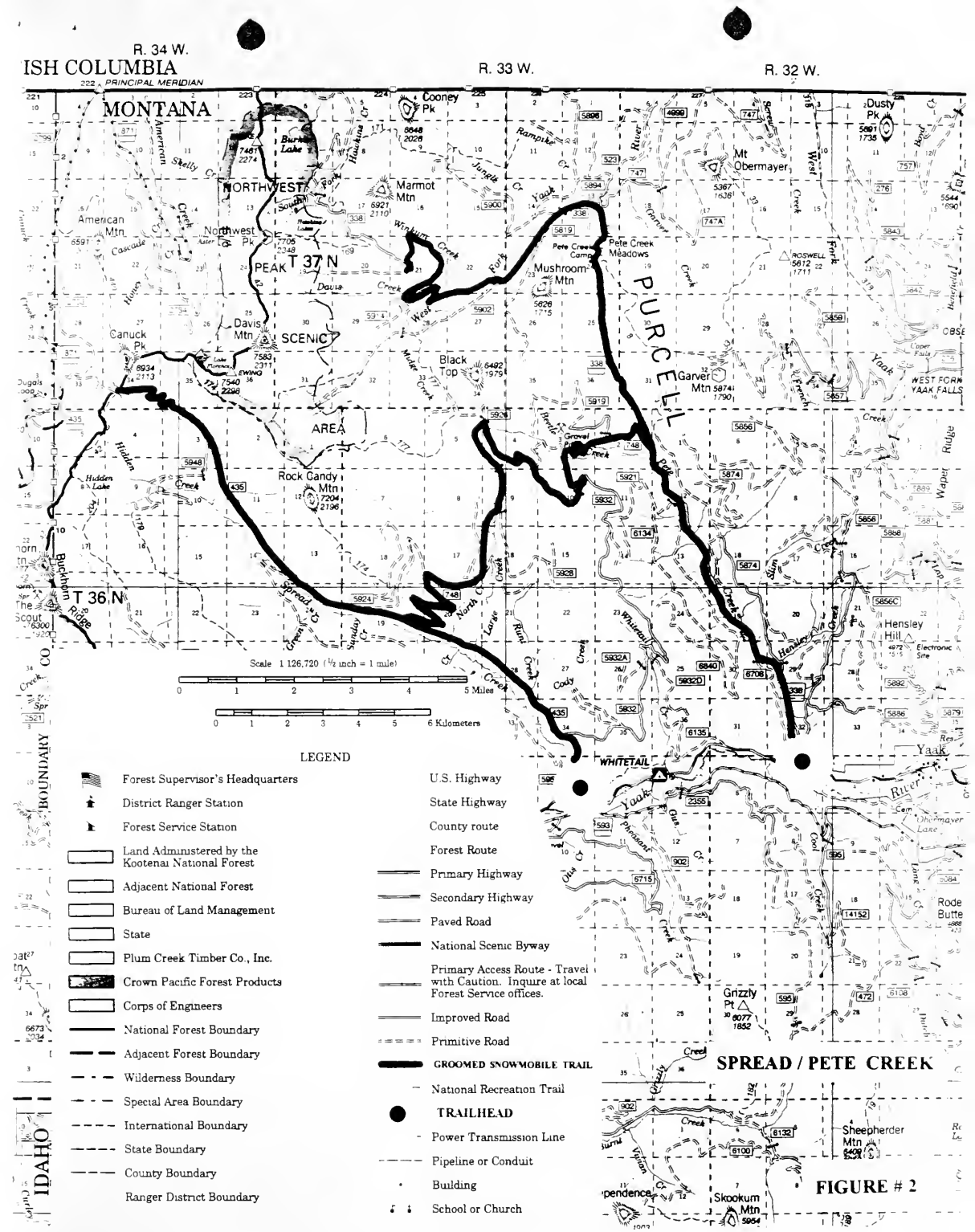

KEELER CREEK
Scale 1:126,720 (1/2 inch = 1 mile)
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Kilometers
LEGEND
Forest Supervisor's Headquarters
District Ranger Station
Forest Service Station
Land Administered by the Kootenai National Forest
Adjacent National Forest
Bureau of Land Management
State
Plum Creek Timber Co., Inc.
Crown Pacific Forest Products
Corps of Engineers
National Forest Boundary
Adjacent Forest Boundary
Wilderness Boundary
Special Area Boundary
International Boundary
State Boundary
County Boundary
Ranger District Boundary
U.S. Highway
State Highway
County route
Forest Route
Primary Highway
Secondary Highway
Paved Road
National Scenic Byway
Primary Access Route - Travel with Caution. Inquire at local Forest Service offices.
Improved Road
Primitive Road
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
National Recreation Trail
TRAILHEAD
Power Transmission Line
Pipeline or Conduit
Building
School or Church
Boat Dock
T. 32 N.
Timber Mtn
Yaak Mtn
Pulpit Mtn
King Mtn
Kootenai Mtn
Troy
Copper Mtn
Lime Butte
Taylor Pk
Wm Grambaue Mt
Benning Mtn
Rattle Mtn
Spruce Mtn
Keeler Mtn
Little Joe
Gaging Station YAAK RIVER
Kilbrennan Lake
Skinner Lake
Alvord Lake
Slee Lake
Lower Lake
Duck Lake
Throops Lake
Savage Lake
Gravel Pits
Pulpit Ridge
Freeman Ridge
Keeler
Porcupine
Twin
Lake
Cabin Creek
Raymond Creek
Star Creek
Quarry
Gravel Pit
Mine
Moose Lake
Halverson
Clatter Cr
Bug Cr
Madge Cr
Swanson Cr
Felix Cr
Lynx Creek Flats
Surprise Gulch
Kedzie Creek
Studebaker
Hummingbird Cr
Rabbit Creek
Lynx
Gaging Sta
Troy Dam
Tunnel
Airstrip
Cem
Schoolhouse
Milnor L.
Mud L.
Shannon L.
Electronic Site
Foothridge
VISTA
KOOTENAI
LION
CABINET WILDERNESS
STATE HIGHWAY 200
R. 3. E.
R. 35 W.
R. 34 W.
R. 33 W.

FIGURE # 1


R. 34 W.
ISH COLUMBIA
222 PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN
R. 33 W.
R. 32 W.
MONTANA
NORTHWEST PEAK SCENIC AREA
T 37 N
T 36 N
PURCELL
Cooney Pk
Dusty Pk
Mt Obermayer
Marmot Mtn
American Mtn.
Northwest Pk
Mushroom Mtn
Pete Creek Meadows
Canuck Pk
Davis Mtn
Black Top
Garver Mtn
Rock Candy Mtn
Hensley Hill
WHITETAIL
Grizzly Pt
Sheepherder Mtn
Skookum Mtn
SPREAD / PETE CREEK
IDAHO
BOUNDARY
Scale 1 126,720 (½ inch = 1 mile)
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Kilometers
LEGEND
Forest Supervisor's Headquarters
District Ranger Station
Forest Service Station
Land Administered by the Kootenai National Forest
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Bureau of Land Management
State
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National Forest Boundary
Adjacent Forest Boundary
Wilderness Boundary
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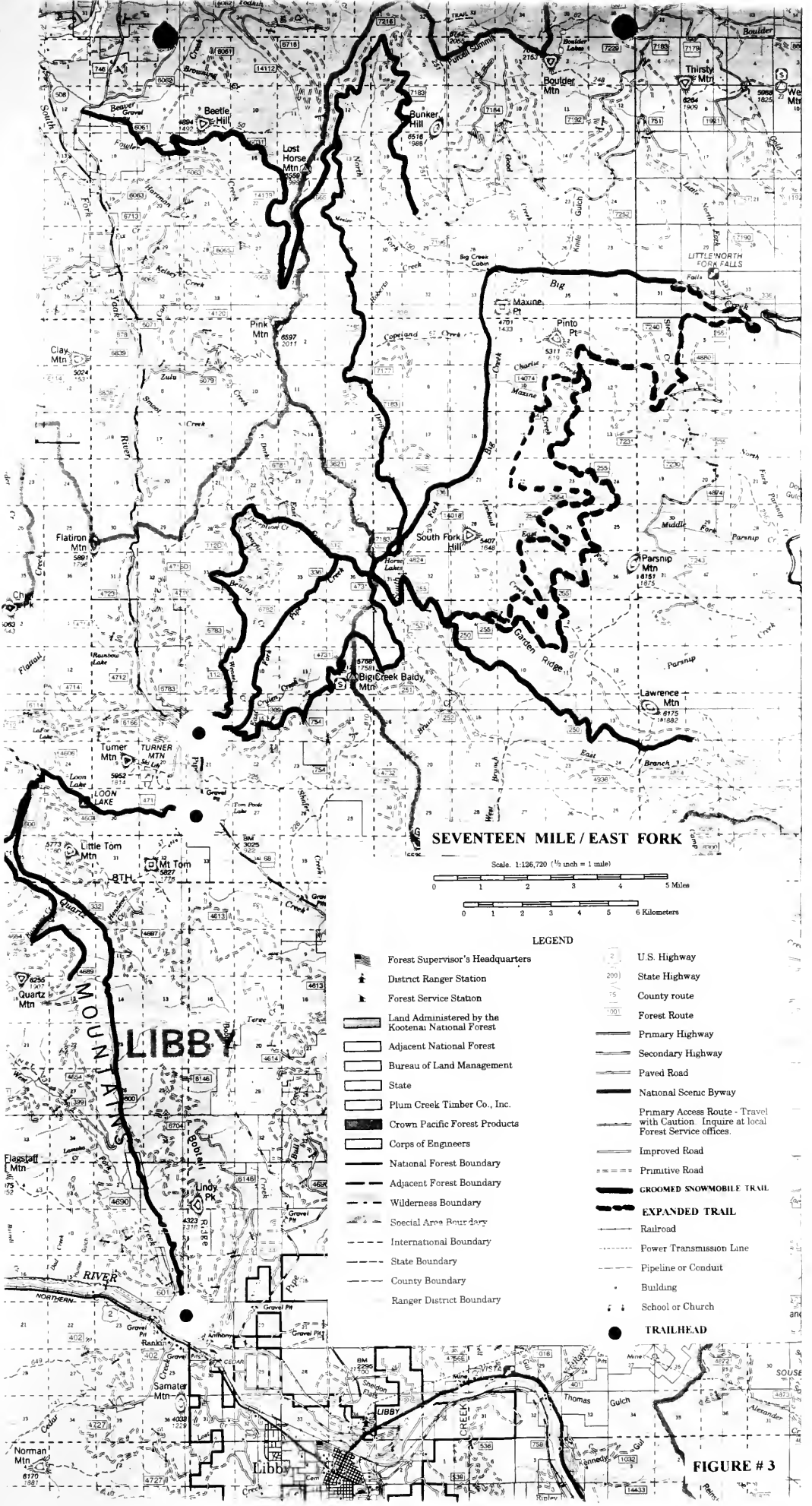
International Boundary
State Boundary
County Boundary
Ranger District Boundary
U.S. Highway
State Highway
County route
Forest Route
Primary Highway
Secondary Highway
Paved Road
National Scenic Byway
Primary Access Route - Travel with Caution. Inquire at local Forest Service offices.
Improved Road
Primitive Road
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
National Recreation Trail
TRAILHEAD
Power Transmission Line
Pipeline or Conduit
Building
School or Church

FIGURE # 2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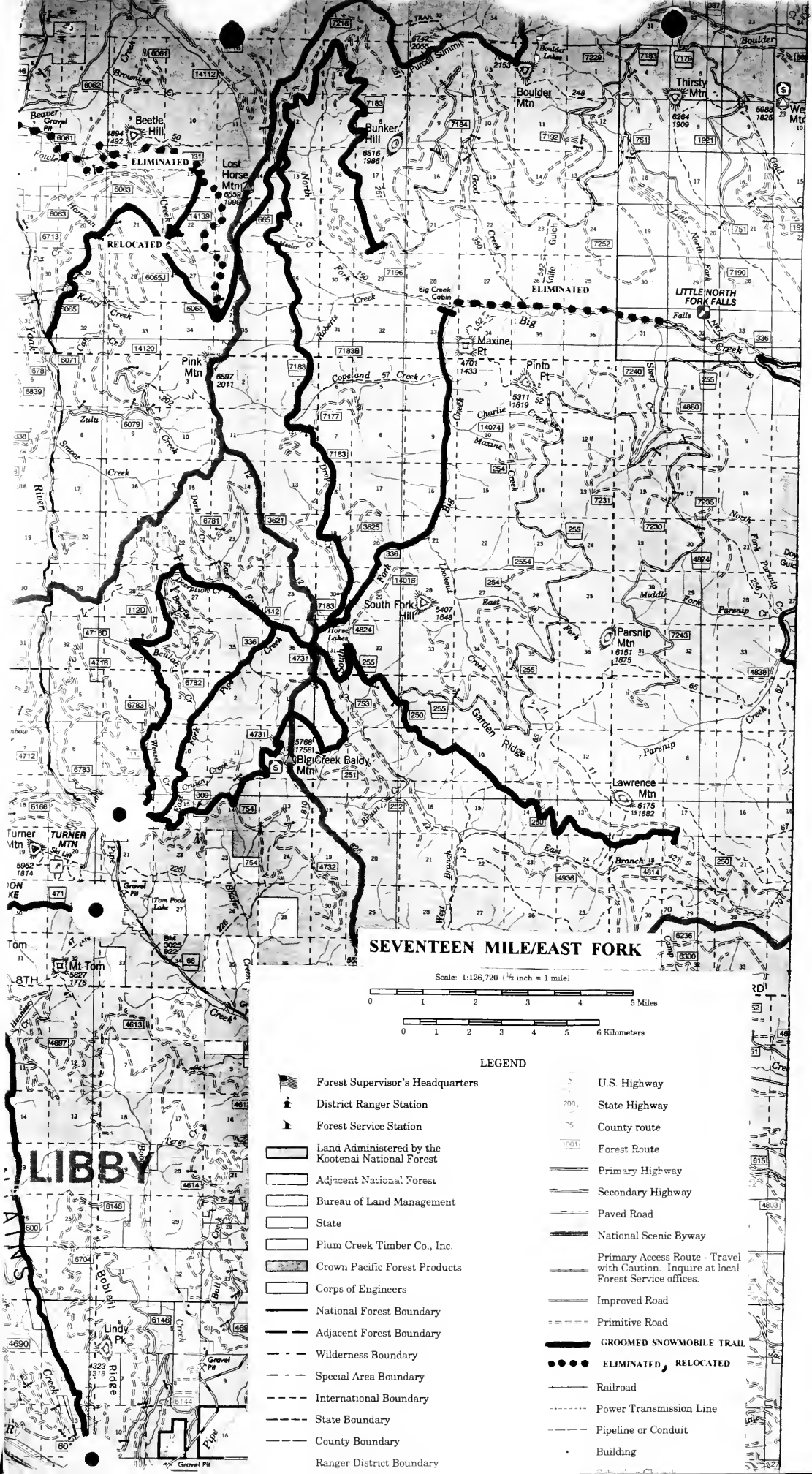
Primary Highway
Secondary Highway
Paved Road
National Scenic Byway
Primary Access Route - Travel with Caution. Inquire at local Forest Service offices.
Improved Road
Primitive Road
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
EXPANDED TRAIL
Railroad
Power Transmission Line
Pipeline or Conduit
Building
School or Church
TRAILHEAD
LIBBY
MOUNTAINS
Beetle Hill
Lost Horse Mtn
Bunker Hill
Boulder Mtn
Thirsty Mtn
Pink Mtn
Clay Mtn
Maxine Pt
Pinto Pt
Flatiron Mtn
South Fork Hill
Parsnip Mtn
Big Creek Baldy Mtn
Lawrence Mtn
Turner Mtn
Little Tom Mtn
Mt Tom
Quartz Mtn
Flagstaff Mtn
Lindy Pk
Samator Mtn
Norman Mtn
Libby
LITTLE NORTH FORK FALLS
LOON LAKE
TURNER MTN
RIVER
CREEK

FIGURE # 3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Primary Access Route - Travel with Caution. Inquire at local Forest Service offices.
Improved Road
Primitive Road
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
ELIMINATED, RELOCATED
Railroad
Power Transmission Line
Pipeline or Conduit
Building
Beetle Hill
ELIMINATED
Lost Horse Mtn
RELOCATED
Bunker Hill
Boulder Mtn
Thirsty Mtn
Big Creek Cabin
ELIMINATED
LITTLE NORTH FORK FALLS
Maxine Pt
Pinto Pt
Pink Mtn
South Fork Hill
Parsnip Mtn
Lawrence Mtn
Big Creek Baldy Mtn
TURNER MTN
Mt Tom
LIBBY
Lindy Pk
Garden Ridge

continue. Safety to all trail users would continue. Control of users in critical wildlife areas would continue. Maintained parking areas would continue to provide satisfactory conditions. Users would be satisfied with the outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the groomed trails. Kootenai National Forest has legal Right-of-Way through areas of private land through which the roads pass.

Alternative #3 - Expand existing trail system in Seventeen Mile/East Fork area only, Figure #3. Retain Figures 1 and 2 as they are.

Upon further review and consultation with the FWP wildlife biologist, this alternative was dropped due to special wildlife concerns (Appendix C).

Alternative #4 - Keeler, Spread/Pete Creek remain the same and Seventeen Mile/East Fork reduced in length and one relocation, Figures 1, 2, and 3a.

The eastern portion of Road #336, and Roads #6061 and #6031, from Road #6065 to Road #68 are no longer groomed. Road #6065 added as a substitute. The trails eliminated from the grooming program have major wildlife concerns.

All other comments in Alternative #2 apply.

Preferred Alternative

Alternative four is the preferred alternative.

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10. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Kootenai National Forest 506 U. S. Hwy 2 West Libby, MT 59923 (406) 293-6211		9/16/94

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region One 490 N. Meridian Road Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 752-5501	

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Kootenai National Forest	Land Management Agency
Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Grant Management

11. **List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Kootenai National Forest, Rexford Ranger District
Montana Natural Heritage Program
KNF Native Americans Representative
Kootenai National Forest, Three Rivers Ranger District
Kootenai National Forest, Libby Ranger District

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PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼ Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
► a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				
► c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		x				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		x				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?			x		No	1.e.
f. Other _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
1.e. Potential snowslides but minimal danger as runs do not generally reach the groomed trail. Locations will be signed at each side of slide areas. Phone number for Avalanche Advisory will be posted. See Sign and Safety Plans (Appendix A).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼ Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
► a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			x		No	2.a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			x		No	2.b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		x				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		x				
e. ♦ For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)						
f. Other _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
2.a.b. Emissions of pollutants and odors will continue until such time when the snowmobile industry improves engine technology reducing emissions. Until such time, owners can reduce emissions by keeping their engines tuned to the makers' specifications. Governor Racicot has asked an effort be made to produce cleaner fuel (Appendix B).

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼ Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
► a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		x				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			x		No	3.b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		x				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		x				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		x				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		x				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		x				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			x		Yes	3.h.
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		x				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		x				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		x				
l. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)						
m. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)						
n. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3.b. Grooming the road surface may slow down snowmelt, reducing the drainage rate and surface runoff, an advantage.

3.h. There may be a minor risk to surface water spilling a small amount of gas or oil at staging areas. Caution against fuel spills is addressed on the public information packet. Do not fill fuel tanks near stream crossings. Users will be encouraged to use biodegradable oil (Appendix B).

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		x				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		x				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		x				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			x		No	4.e.
f. ♦ ♦ For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?						
g. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4.e. There is the chance that some weed seed may be brought into the trailheads by vehicles in the winter, but the spreading of seed by snowmobiles over deep snow would be minimal. The majority of weed seed spread is due to motorized vehicles during the summer and fall months. Snowmobilers should be encouraged to wash their vehicles, trailers, and machines prior to winter use. The Forest Service controls weeds on their property. They are assisted by the Montana Weed Control Board, which is partly funded by Snowmobile Grant Money (Appendix A).

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦ ♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

▸ 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼ Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		x				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		x				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		x				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		x				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		x				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			x		Yes	5.f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			x		No	5.g.
h. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)			x		Yes	5.h.
i. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)						
j. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5.f. Grooming dates are set (December 1 - March 31) to eliminate interference with grizzly bears. An undated Biological Evaluation completed by the Forest Service District biologist states on page 15, that "the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat (Appendix C).

5.g. See wildlife biologist report (Appendix C). Two trailheads are located in winter game range. These trailheads are also located on a major road with winter automobile traffic. No alternative routes exists. The biologist does not feel their location will have an adverse impact on the animals. Signing will also be posted requesting that the public do not harass or chase wildlife (Signs Plan, Appendix A). Trails are also located in moose winter ranges, however, they're winter range extends over a wide area, both at high and low elevations. The biologist does not feel this will adversely affect moose.

5.h. Data has been received from the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Maps indicating plant and animal species are included, none showing locations near the groomed trails. The program does not wish the maps to become public knowledge due to the sensitive data.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			x		No	6.a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		x				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		x				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		x				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6.a. There will be some increase in winter noise levels, mainly at the access points. Levels will decrease as you leave the access points. Snowmobile noise levels are limited and regulated by Federal and State Laws.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		x				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		x				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		x				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		x				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		x				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?			x		Yes	8.b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		x				
d. ♦ For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)						
e. Other: _____			x		Yes	8.e.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8.b. While situations of an emergency cannot be reduced, a positive impact will be created through the use of plans developed by the club and the local Search and Rescue organization (Appendix A).

8.e. If timber harvesting and transportation of logs occur on any of the groomed trails, snowmobiling will cease, and signs will be posted (Sign Plans, Appendix A).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		x				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		x				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		x				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		x				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		x				
f. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1e (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action:	IMPACT ☼ Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____		x				
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		x				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		x				
d. Result in increased used of any energy source?			x		No	10.d.
► e. Define projected revenue sources		x				
► f. Define projected maintenance costs.		x				
g. Other:_____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
10.d. Gasoline use will increase as a result of snowmobile and vehicle use during the winter months.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

► 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼ Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		x				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		x				
►c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			x		Positive Impact	11.c.
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)						
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
11.c. Club has kept observation reports to see effect of winter recreation use. A report prepared by the Flathead National Forest indicates that winter recreation use benefits the local economy.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1e (ARM)
♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts
♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
►a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		x				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		x				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		x			N/A	12.c.
d. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		x			N/A	12.d.
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
12.c. Four attempts were made to contact the KNF Native Americans representative. No response was received.
12.d. The groomed trails are on existing roads, therefore SHPO laws do not apply.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		x				13.a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?			x			13.b.
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		x				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		x				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		x				
f. ♦For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)						
g. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
13.a. There are a few minor impacts recorded in this EA that are individually limited in overall significance. The cumulative effects of those impacts do not create secondary adverse stress on the available resources.
13.b. The potential avalanche slides cannot be mitigated, however, with proper signing, warning, and avalanche reporting, it can significantly reduce the danger to the trail users (Appendix A).

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

14. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

The alternatives are described and discussed with an appropriate map in Section #9. Alternative #4 is the preferred alternative.

15. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Avalanche warning signs. Avalanche Report phone numbers to be posted at appropriate places. Fuel spillage over 25 gallons to be reported to Department of Environmental Quality. Dates of December 1 through March 31 established for grooming to reduce or eliminate impact to animals. Safety program, and Search and Rescue Program adopted. Sign plan developed (Appendix A).

16. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? **NO** If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

It is not anticipated that this program will generate any substantial debate or concerns. An Open House will be held in Libby to collect public comment.

17. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

No substanial debate is expected. Open House will be held in Libby to collect public comment.

18. Duration of comment period if any: None, to date.

19. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Wayne B. Worthington, Consultant Landscape Architect 365 Summit Ridge Drive Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 752-2916	Lincoln County Sno-Kats Ed Nixon, Past President PO Box 1180 Libby, MT 59923 (406) 293-8644	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Marty Watkins 490 N. Meridian Rd. Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 752-5501

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

1.e. Potential snowslides but minimal danger as runs do not generally reach the groomed trail. Locations will be signed at each side of slide areas. Phone number for Avalanche Advisory will be posted. See Sign and Safety Plans (Appendix A).

2.a.b. Emissions of pollutants and odors will continue until such time when the snowmobile industry improves engine technology reducing emissions. Until such time, owners can reduce emissions by keeping their engines tuned to the makers' specifications. Governor Racicot has asked an effort be made to produce cleaner fuel (Appendix B).

3.b. Grooming the road surface may slow down snowmelt, reducing the drainage rate and surface runoff, an advantage.
3.h. There may be a minor risk to surface water spilling a small amount of gas or oil at staging areas. Caution against fuel spills is addressed on the public information packet. Do not fill fuel tanks near stream crossings. Users will be encouraged to use biodegradable oil (Appendix B).

4.e. There is the chance that some weed seed may be brought into the trailheads by vehicles in the winter, but the spreading of seed by snowmobiles over deep snow would be minimal. The majority of weed seed spread is due to motorized vehicles during the summer and fall months. Snowmobilers should be encouraged to wash their vehicles, trailers, and machines prior to winter use. The Forest Service controls weeds on their property. They are assisted by the Montana Weed Control Board, which is partly funded by Snowmobile Grant Money (Appendix A).

5.f. Grooming dates are set (December 1 - March 31) to eliminate interference with grizzly bears. An undated Biological Evaluation completed by the Forest Service District biologist states on page 15, that "the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat (Appendix C).
5.g. See wildlife biologist report (Appendix C). Two trailheads are located in winter game range. These trailheads are also located on a major road with winter automobile traffic. No alternative routes exists. The biologist does not feel their location will have an adverse impact on the animals. Signing will also be posted requesting that the public do not harass or chase wildlife(Signs Plan, Appendix A). Trails are also located in moose winter ranges, however, they're winter range extends over a wide area, both at high and low elevations. The biologist does not feel this will adversely affect moose.
5.h. Data has been received from the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Maps indicating plant and animal species are included, none showing locations near the groomed trails. The program does not wish the maps to become public knowledge due to the sensitive data.

6.a. There will be some increase in winter noise levels, mainly at the access points. Levels will decrease as you leave the access points. Snowmobile noise levels are limited and regulated by Federal and State Laws.

8.b. While situations of an emergency cannot be reduced, a positive impact will be created through the use of plans developed by the club and the local Search and Rescue organization (Appendix A).
8.e. If timber harvesting and transportation of logs occur on any of the groomed trails, snowmobiling will cease, and signs will be posted (Sign Plans, Appendix A).

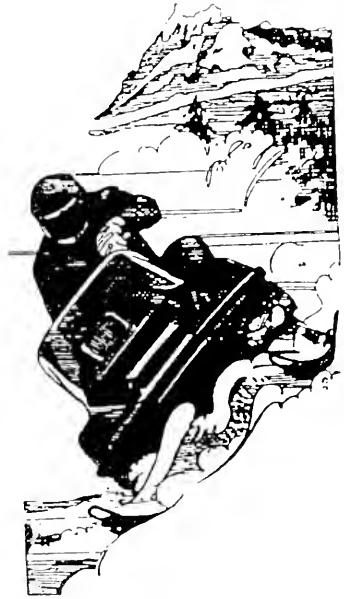
10.d. Gasoline use will increase as a result of snowmobile and vehicle use during the winter months.

11.c. Club has kept observation reports to see effect of winter recreation use. A report prepared by the Flathead National Forest indicates that winter recreation use benefits the local economy.

12.c. Four attempts were made to contact the KNF Native Americans representative. No response was received.
12.d. The groomed trails are on existing roads, therefore SHPO laws do not apply.

13.a. There are a few minor impacts recorded in this EA that are individually limited in overall significance. The cumulative effects of those impacts do not create secondary adverse stress on the available resources.
13.b. The potential avalanche slides cannot be mitigated, however, with proper signing, warning, and avalanche reporting, it can significantly reduce the danger to the trail users (Appendix A).

REF:Kootenai.EA



Environmental Review Criteria

MONTANA
SNOWMOBILE GRANT
PROGRAM

1994

Montana Department of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Environmental Review Criteria
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Snowmobile Grant Program

Proposals for grants allocated under the Montana Snowmobile Grant Program shall be reviewed in accordance with the following Environmental Review Criteria. Environmental review on existing funded snowmobile trails will be completed as expeditiously as possible with the Department setting priorities and attempting to complete environmental review first for those funded trails located in the more environmentally sensitive areas. In no case will an existing trail, not in full compliance within three years, continue to be funded under the Grant Program. In some cases, proposed projects may be determined by the Department to be categorically excluded from the environmental review process. A categorical exclusion may be denied if the Department determines that special circumstances warrant further environmental review. Such circumstances include those where use of the trail may individually, collectively or cumulatively cause significant environmental impacts. If a project satisfies number 1 below, the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion.

1. Continuation of an existing program with no on-ground changes and that has previously satisfied MEPA reviews.

Projects that do not satisfy number 1, but do satisfy numbers 2 through 7, qualify for a categorical exclusion.

2. Snowmobile trail on federal lands is already incorporated in U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management travel plan and Multi-Party Agreement has been signed.

3. Fish, Wildlife and Parks wildlife clearance has been obtained.

4. Snowmobile Project Agreement has been signed by sponsor and Department.

5. Project is on an existing roadway or previously ungroomed, but authorized by the land management agency, snowmobile trail.

6. Development or improvements on federal lands have already satisfied NEPA.

7. Trail is not in a wilderness study area or designated non-motorized area.

If the proposed project does not meet the requirements necessary for a categorical exclusion it must be reviewed in accordance with the Environmental Review Criteria identified below:

When reviewing projects within the checklist that result in a request for additional information, three subsequent requests for the same information will result in a denial of the project, or that portion of the project if it is a stand alone component.

Prior to making a final determination that a new or substantially changed application satisfies the criteria for a categorical exclusion, the Department will provide fifteen calendar days for public review and comment.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
Issue 1 Administration	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	1	Does map clearly identify proposed activities (i e. trails, parking lots, etc.)?	(Y)	Go to #2	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
	Decision memo and env. document from land mgmnt agency	2	Do any proposed activities occur on lands managed by another agency?	(Y)	Go to #2a	✓
				N	Go to #3	
		2a	Did the land mgmnt agency prepare an env. document?	Y	Go to #2b	✓
				(N)	Go to #3	
		2b	Was the decision memo supplied with application?	Y	Go to #4	
				N	Request Submittal	
	Internal environmental review document	3	Does the proposal include operation and maintenance projects?	(Y)	Go to #3b	✓
				N	Go to #3a	
		3a	Does the proposal include expansion or construction of trails or facilities	Y	Go to #3b	
				N	Go to #4	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		3b	Has checklist EA been prepared	(Y)	Go to #3c	
				N	Request submittal	
		3c	Does the checklist EA satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	(Y)	Go to #3h	✓
				N	Go to #3d	
		3d	Has an EA been prepared?	Y	Go to #3e	
				N	Request EA	
		3e	Did the EA satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	Y	Go to #3h	
				N	Go to #3f	
		3f	Has an EIS been prepared?	Y	Go to #3g	
				N	Request EIS	
		3g	Did EIS satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	Y	Go to #3h	
				N	Reject Proposal	
		3h	Did applicant supply decision notice?	Y	Go to #4	✓
				(N)	Request Submittal	3h
	Licenses, Leases, permits, clearances, etc.	4	Has applicant supplied appropriate copies required by other agencies?	(Y)	Go to #6	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
Issue 2 Air Quality	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	6	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #6a	✓
				N	Request submittal	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		6a	Does proposal include expansion of existing or construction of new trails?	(Y)	Go to #6b	✓
				N	Go to #7	
	Connection to other trails or trail systems	6b	Does the expanded or new trail connect with another trail system or trail?	Y	Go to #7	✓
				(N)	Go to #7	6b
	Public awareness plan	7	Has applicant submitted a public awareness plan?	(Y)	Go to #9	✓
				N	Request submittal	
Issue 3 Topography, Soils, Hydrology	Map identifying proposed trail or facilities	9	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #9a	✓
				N	Request submittal	
		9a	Are there areas of known insufficient snowcover along proposed trails?	Y	Go to #9b	✓
				(N)	Go to #9c	
		9b	Are areas of known insufficient snowcover identified on the maps?	Y	Go to #9c	
				N	Request submittal	
		9c	Are there areas characterized by summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #9d	✓
				(N)	Go to #10	
		9d	Are areas of known wet meadows identified on the map?	Y	Go to #9e	
				N	Request Submittal	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		9e	Have viable alternatives around areas of known insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows been identified?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #10	
				N	Request Submittal	
	Avoidance	10	Has applicant submitted a plan for avoidance of areas of known insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #10a	✓
				(N)	Request plan	10
		10a	Does the plan identify specific measures for each area identified on the map?	Y	Go to #11	
				N	Request Specifics	
	Seasonal Restrictions	11	Does the proposal include stream crossings?	(Y)	Go to #11a	✓
				N	Go to #12	
		11a	Does the proposed stream crossing utilize an existing structure?	(Y)	Go to #12	✓
				N	Go to #11b	
		11b	Are there viable alternatives to crossing the stream that would utilize existing structures?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #12	
				N	Go to #11c	

B. To abide by the State Prevailing Wage Rate - Section 18-2-406 MCA, which provides that contractors, sub-contractors and employees who are performing services under public works contracts as provided in Part 4, MCA shall post in a prominent and accessible site on the project or work area, not later than the first day of work, a legible statement of all wages to be paid to the employees on such site or work area.

5. Agrees that the Department may unilaterally terminate any contract resulting from this proposal upon refusal by the Club to allow access to records necessary to carry out the legislative audit and analysis function set forth in Title V, Chapters 12 and 13, MCA.

6. Agrees that venue will be in Lewis and Clark County should any legal action arise from this proposal or any contract issued in whole or in part therefrom.

7. Agrees that it is understood that a failure to comply with any of the provisions listed above can result in a rejection of this proposal and/or the voiding of any resulting contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, conditions, and terms hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

1. The period covered by this agreement will begin July 1, (current year) and will continue in effect until June 30, (following year).

2. This agreement may be revised as necessary, by mutual consent of all parties by issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties.

3. The rights and obligations of any part to this agreement may be terminated upon giving thirty (30) days notice by the party.

4. The agreement accepts the Snowmobile Project Proposal/Application and becomes part of the agreement.

BY: CLUB

Randy Kemp — 6-13-96
President — Date

Jackie Drake — 5-13-96
Secretary — Date

BY: DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Regional Supervisor — 5/13/96
Date

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maintenance shall be conducted as conditions required during the agreement period.

B. Permit inspection of the project by the Department or its employees or agents at any and all reasonable times during the term of the agreement.

C. Indemnify and save harmless the State and the Department from all claims from injuries or damages arising or growing out of the operations performed under any resulting agreement.

D. Will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, or marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin in the use of any property or facility maintained pursuant to any resulting agreement.

E. Fully comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, etc. It shall be the Club's responsibility to familiarize itself with the relevant laws, rules, regulations, etc.

F. Require that in all subcontracts let in fulfilling any resulting agreement, preference must be given to the employment of bona fide Montana residents at the prevailing rate of wages applicable to the county or locality in which the work is being performed (section 18-3-401, et. seq., MCA).

G. Provide the Department with documentation of actual and necessary expenses incurred in trail maintenance in the form and upon the dates requested; all such documentation will be submitted by May 1 of the contract period. The Club agrees to allow and permit legislative or department auditors access to its records for the purpose of determining that this grant is administered in accordance with grant terms and conditions as set forth in any resulting agreement.

4. Agrees that any contract resulting from this proposal shall be with the Club, as an <u>independent contractor</u> and does not establish an employer-employee relationship between the Department and the Club or any person employed by the Club for any purpose. In this regard, the Club agrees:

A. To pay all required state, federal or local taxes, fees, including unemployment insurance and workers' compensation insurance or other assessments related to employment of any person or individual employed by the Club as necessary in fulfillment of this contract.

2.4.2. Snowmobile Project Agreement

SNOWMOBILE PROJECT AGREEMENT

THIS PROPOSAL requests an agreement be established between the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, an agency of the State of Montana, hereinafter called "Department," and (club name) Lincoln County Sno-bots hereinafter called "the Club."

WITNESSETH:

RECITALS

1. Montana statutes earmark a portion of gasoline taxes and snowmobile registration decal fees for snowmobile facility operation, maintenance and development for public use at no cost to the public.

2. Sufficient funds have accrued in the snowmobile earmarked revenue account to fund this proposal.

3. The Parks Division, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, is responsible for the administration of this program.

4. The Parks Division desires to seek means of funding snowmobile facilities maintenance projects, and to seek baseline information for snowmobile operations projects.

5. The Club is an entity in the immediate vicinity of the trails to be maintained and is desirous of seeing trails maintained for snowmobilers.

6. Both parties hereto desire to maintain trails for snowmobile use on land shown on a map submitted as a supplement to this application, designated Attachment "B", and

7. As demonstrated by the attached written statements, the landowner(s) of affected property(ies) has/have granted permission to the Club to carry out the proposal on affected property.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, conditions, and terms hereinafter set forth, the Club proposes:

1. That Attachment "B" is an accurate depiction of the areas covered by this proposal.

2. That the Club will perform the following activities and duties:

   A. Utilize dollars granted for the purpose of maintaining snowmobile trails detailed in Attachment "B". This

Safety and Education Program

Describe the extent of your safety and education program. This information is weighed heavily during the budget process and is an indication of the club's commitment to the program.

a. Examples of volunteer labor: trail clearing and marking, equipment maintenance, groomer operator, groomer "co-pilot," etc. Volunteer efforts performing trail inspections and maintaining the signing program are also considered eligible donations. Volunteer wages are estimated at Montana's current minimum wage.

b. Examples of donated equipment: trail groomer, transportation to clear and mark trails, use of personal snowmobile to accompany groomer operator, use of chain saw to clear trails, etc. Vehicles may be credited at $.21 per mile. Use of chainsaws will be credited at $30 per day.

c. Examples of donated supplies and materials: signs, hardware, fuel, oil, parts, etc. Value of donated supplies and materials will be established by soliciting verbal bids and "best-guess" estimate.

d. Cash: club funds used to pay operating costs.

Equipment

Briefly describe existing and desired grooming equipment.

Estimating Number of Miles to be Groomed

Estimate the number of miles of trail that will be groomed during the course of the winter. This figure represents the total miles you expect to put on the grooming equipment during the next season.

Miles of Groomed Trails

This figure represents the total number of miles in the project's trail system.

Signing Needs for Upcoming Season

This represents your signing needs for the next season. Work with the regional park manager and the safety/education officer in Helena in developing your signing needs.

Mapping Needs for the Upcoming Season

Describe here what your mapping needs are. Work with the regional park manager and safety/education officer.

Club Officers

List the current officers. It is mandatory that each club has an appointed Safety Officer

Guidelines for Completing the Snowmobile
Project Proposal/Application

Estimating Project Cost

If the club chooses to account for costs by the mile, calculate cost per mile by dividing total operating costs by the number of miles expected to be groomed. Do not include development costs in grooming cost-per-mile calculations.

Total estimated costs include:

Grooming Costs - All costs incurred to operate the groomer such as fuel, oil, groomer operator wages, and payments for contracted snow grooming.

Repair Costs - All costs associated with repair and maintenance of grooming equipment such as shop rental, parts and labor.

Administrative Costs - All costs associated with the administration of a grooming program such as insurance premiums, utilities, workman's compensation, income tax withholding, telephone costs and secretarial or accounting service expenses.

Development Costs - All costs associated with development of facilities such as materials or labor, fuel and oil for transportation or power tools or heavy equipment use.

Plowing Costs - Costs incurred for plowing parking lots or roads either by contract, through an inter-agency agreement, or as part of regular grooming operations.

Total project costs and total club's contribution are the total of Grooming Cost Column and Development Costs Column.

Establishing Value of Club's Contributions

The club should prepare a list of anticipated activities which will enhance their snowmobile project. These activities should include any that would be allowable as a program expense. For example, trail clearing would be allowable, hosting a trail ride would not be.

Clubs should be encouraged to support their program, through volunteer efforts, donation of money, materials or equipment. List anticipated value of cash donations, man hours of donated labor, equipment used, supplies and materials furnished.

Clubs/sponsors must also provide proof of insurance coverage if they do not purchase insurance from the state policy.

15. Assurances:

We shall remove, lessen or sign known and potential hazards in cooperation with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and affected landowners. We will have a safety plan detailing education efforts, search and rescue, accident reporting and follow-up procedures developed prior to any trail grooming.

Before any mid-season trail additions or route changes, we will:

1) Obtain, in writing, permission from any private or public landowner or land management agency affected and provide to Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

2) Receive written approval, including wildlife and safety clearances, for such additions/changes from Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

For any organized special events, including competitive events, fun runs or activities outside of normal trail use, we will:

1) Contact the appropriate land-managing agency(ies) for the necessary permits.

2) Develop an event-specific safety plan.

When applicable, all operations shall follow the "Development and Operating Agreement" between the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; the U.S. Forest Service; the Bureau of Land Management and snowmobile clubs.

Club President/Chair Date Secretary or Treasurer Date

11. Describe any future plans your club has, or is considering, for improvement of your snowmobile trail program. This might include interlinking your system with an adjoining club's trail system, interpretive signing, improved general trail signing, trail-head facilities, safety training and trail safety improvements/changes, etc.

12. Club Officers. (Type or print legibly.)

President

Name Randy Reiner
Address 565 [illegible]
_____

Phone (w) 293-8142 (h) 293 7683

Grooming Chair

Name David E Schiker[illegible]
Address [illegible]
Libby, MT 59923

Phone (w) _____ (h) 293-6[illegible]

Safety Officer

Name John [illegible]
Address 2072 Iron Creek
Troy MT 59935

Phone (w) _____ h 295-[illegible]

Secretary/Treasurer

Name Jackie Drake
Address 100 Dean Creek
Libby, MT 59923

Phone (w) 293-6871 (h) 293-5[illegible]

13. Do you wish to receive a pre-season check in the amount of 75% of the total grant approved (this will be contingent on the reception of all necessary approvals, agreements and application materials)? Yes ____ No _____

14. Do you wish to be included under the liability insurance policy for the snowmobile program negotiated by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks? Yes _____ No _____

A. If club (sponsor) does grooming with a state groomer, do you want full coverage from state policy (includes club liability, and property damage)?

Yes ____ No _____

B. If club contracts grooming to a private contractor, do you still want club liability insurance from the state policy? *

Yes _____ No _____

* The state insurance coverage is not available to private contractors. They must show proof of having purchased their own insurance coverage and workman's compensation.

6B. With Sponsor (club) equipment).

6C. By an independent contractor operating their own equipment. Attach a copy of proof of liability insurance, Workers Compensation Certification and club-contractor agreement.

Contractor	Equipment Type	Size	Width

6D. Indicate any additional or future equipment needs and or anticipated major maintenance needs.

7. Trail Signing. Identify signing needs for the upcoming season. (use additional sheet if necessary)

Type of Sign	Quantity
Trail Markers (Brand 5x7)	100

8. If applicable, is this proposal consistent with approved Forest Service travel plans or BLM unit plans?

_____ Not applicable; all trails on private land.
_____ Yes. See written approval.
_____ No. Approval Pending. Explain on separate page.

9. Total number of trail users (last season). List by trail.

Trail name	Total # of Users
See attached Report	

Attach copy of trail count or other records. Use separate sheet if necessary.

10. Describe the extent of Safety and Education Program:

John Church on Safety Council discusses safety concerns and reports at each meeting. Additional training with the Forest Service and Sewin and Nesbit was attended by alot of club members and local rider. John Church also attended a Safety training workshop in Helena.

Discussion of importance of signs on trails and [illegible]

[illegible]

4. Is this a new project no ? Is any part of this trail system new since last year no ? If so, identify those new portions on accompanying map and be certain to include signed Wildlife Clearance forms with application.

5A. Total number of miles of trail in your groomed system 205

Miles of Primary Trail (groomed regularly) 72

Miles of Secondary Trail (groomed occasionally or only for special events.) 133

5B. Anticipated total number of miles of trail to be groomed during season. Only include actual trail miles groomed. Do not include distance (miles) groomer is run (but not grooming) in getting from one trailhead to another. 975

5C. Miles of groomed snowmobile trail by ownership: (this should add-up to the total miles reported in (5A).

U.S. Forest Service	205
Bureau of Land Management	
Dept. of State Lands	
County	
City	
Private Land	

6. Equipment. Identify below the manner in which trails will be groomed and maintained:

6A. With Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks equipment.

Groomer:

Type	Size	Width	Serial #	FWP Property #
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	TEM-[illegible]	6606

Implements:

Type	Size	Width	Serial #	FWP Property #
Mars	Idaho Special	[illegible]	TG-[illegible]-mmc 173	

Trailers:

Type	Size	Width	Serial #	FWP Property #

2.4.1. Snowmobile Trail Project Proposal/Application

SNOWMOBILE PROJECT
PROPOSAL/APPLICATION

1. Estimated project cost

Calculate project costs below (see guidelines that follow):

	Grooming Costs	Development Costs
Grooming costs	$ 17482.00	
Repair costs	1,020.00	
Administration costs	920.00	
Development costs		
Plowing costs		
Other (specify)_____		
Total costs	$ 19,422.00	$
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	$ 19,422.00	

2. Club's contributions

Calculate project costs below (see guideline that follows)

	Grooming Costs	Development Costs
Grooming costs	$ 12,850.00	
Repair costs		
Administration costs		
Development costs		
Plowing costs		
Other (specify)_____		
Total contribution	$ 12,850.00	$
TOTAL CLUB'S CONTRIBUTION	$ 12,850.00	

Provide the following additional detail for development activities.

Activity	Estimated Cost	Target Completion Date

Attached to this application are site plans, location maps, and landowner permission (in cases of development on federal lands this generally requires an Environmental Assessment completed by the managing agency).

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN

Snowmobile Project Proposal/Applications
Development and Operating Agreement
Snowmobile Equipment Lease
Equipment Lease Schedule and Grooming Schedule
District Trail Grooming Approval
Goals and Objectives
Safety Plan
Sign Plan
Air Quality
Vegetation
Water Quality
Wilderness
Wildlife
Events

DRAFT

COMMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA

3.h. The decision notice will be furnished by FWP after review and final decision.

6.b. Source trail length has been reduced due to wildlife concerns. One portion of trail, 6031 and 6061, have been replaced by trail 6065, also due to wildlife concerns.

10. No plan has been submitted because there are no areas of insufficient snowcover or wet meadows.

13.d. & 13.e. See Appendix C. Wildlife biologist has accepted location. Is on fringe of area and automobile traffic along main Yaak road. Snowmobile use does not adversely affect the wildlife due to the amount of traffic.

14. See item 5f of Environmental Review.

15.f. Westslope cutthroat trout located in stream tributaries of Pete Creek. Snowmobilers do not travel these tributaries.

20.a. & 20.b. Kootenai National Forest and County Weed Control Board monitor and develop spray programs.

24.b. Some roads pass through portions or corners of private land. The Kootenai National Forest has legal Right-of-Way over these lands.

28. There are no residents along the groomed trails.

30. Sec. 30a. If trash accumulates, club members will clean it up. No major problems to date.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		30a	Has applicant proposed "pack-it-in pack-it-out" type signing strategy?	(Y)	Go to #30b	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #30b	
	Trail Location Strategies	30b	Has applicant satisfied questions 25 - 29?	(Y)	Go to #31	✓
				N	Go to #25	
		31	Have all appropriate boxes in right-hand column been checked?	(Y)	Env. considerations approved	✓
				N	Take appropriate actions until all boxes are checked	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		27a	Has applicant established appropriate speed limits or hourly restrictions in areas of sensitivity?	Y	Go to #28	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #28	
		28	Has applicant proposed public awareness plan that includes consideration for residential and sensitive areas?	(Y)	Go to #29	✓
				(N)	Stipulate-Go to #29	
Issue 8 Law Enforcement		29	Has applicant provided law enforcement report from DFW&P Region Warden Captain and/or land managing agency identifying documented snowmobile trespass on private lands and/or wilderness areas caused by adjoining or nearby funded trail and proposal for addressing such violations?	(Y)	Go to #30	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #30	
Issue 10 Changes in Aesthetic Values	Litter Remediation	30	Has applicant included a trash receptacle location, placement and management strategy?	Y	Go to #30a	✓
				(N)	Stipulate - Go to #30a	30

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		25d	Do viable alternatives exist that would situate topographic features between proposed trail and wilderness area or designated non-motorized area?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25e	
				N	Go to #25e	
		25e	Does proposal include trails on or adjacent to established cc ski trails?	Y	Go to #25f	✓
				(N)	Go to #26	
		25f	Are there viable alts. that would avoid placement of proposed trails on or adjacent to cc ski trails?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #26	
				N	Go to #26	
	Signing	26	Has signing program been established that would warn snowmobilers of shared use areas, wilderness boundaries, intersections, etc?	(Y)	Go to #27	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #27	
	Speed Limits	27	Does proposed trail go through residential areas or areas of particular sensitivity?	Y	Go to #27a	✓
				(N)	Go to #28	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
	Avoidance	24c	Do viable alternatives exist that avoid private property?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25	✓
				(N)	Go to #24d	
	Signing and public awareness	24d	Has applicant included a strategy for signing and public awareness re: private property?	(Y)	Go to #25	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #25	
Issue 9 Wilderness Areas	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	25	Do maps identify proposed trail locations?	(Y)	Go to #25a	✓
				N	Request - Go to #25a	
		25a	Are proposed trails located near wilderness boundary or designated non-motorized recreation area?	Y	Go to #25b	✓
				(N)	Go to #25e	
	Trail location strategies	25b	Is there heavy vegetative cover or topographic features between proposed trail and wilderness boundary/designated non-motorized area?	Y	Go to #25e	
				N	Go to #25c	
		25c	Do viable alternatives exist that would utilize vegetative screening between wilderness boundary or designated non-motorized area?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25e	
				N	Go to #25d	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
	Site specific treatment	23e	Was SHPO consulted for determination of need for cultural resource investigation?	Y	Go to #23f	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #23f	
		23f	Was a cultural resource investigation conducted?	Y	Go to #23g	
				N	Inquire as to why	
		23g	Were significant sites found?	Y	Go to #23h	
				N	Go to #24	
		23h	Were adequate mitigations applied (i.e. reroute, etc.)?	Y	Go to #23i	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 23i	
	Public awareness plan	23i	Is a public awareness strategy proposed?	Y	Go to #24	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #24	
Issue 8 Safety/Private Property	Maps identifying proposed trails and facilities	24	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #24a	✓
				N	Request - Go to 24a	
		24a	Does application include proposal for signing strategy identifying locations for warning signs?	(Y)	Go to #24b	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to 24b	
		24b	Have private properties along proposed trails been identified?	(Y)	Go to #24c	✓
				N	Request - Go to #24c	24b

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		22a	Does application include projected number of trail users generated by the events?	(Y)	Go to #22b	✓
				N	Request - Go to #22b	
		22b	Does application include a public safety plan for the events?	(Y)	Go to #22c	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #22c	
		22c	Has applicant identified additional employment requirements during event?	(Y)	Go to #23	✓
				N	Request - Go to #23	
Issue 7 Cultural	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	23	Has map identifying proposed trails or facilities been submitted?	(Y)	Go to #23a	✓
				N	Request - Go to #23a	
		23a	Is entire proposed trail/facility located within an existing road or trail?	(Y)	Go to #24	✓
				N	Go to #23b	
		23b	Does all or a portion of the proposed trail/facility occur on a historic road or trail?	Y	Go to #23d	
				N	Go to #23c	
		23c	Does all or a portion of the proposed trail/facility occur on an undeveloped land?	Y	Go to #23d	
				N	Go to #24	
		23d	Do viable alternative routes exist that could utilize existing roads or trails?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #24	
				N	Go to #23e	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		19l	Has applicant submitted an avoidance or seasonal restriction plan for areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #20	
				N	Request - Go to 20	
	Monitoring for noxious weeds	20	Are noxious weeds present within the trail area, particularly in staging areas?	(Y)	Go to #20a	✓
				N	Go to #21	
		20a	Has noxious weed plan been proposed in application?	(Y)	Go to #20b	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to 20b	20a
		20b	Has a monitoring plan been proposed to survey vegetation damage and spread of noxious weeds?	(Y)	Go to #21	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #21	20b
	Public Awareness	21	Has a public awareness strategy been proposed?	(Y)	Go to #22	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #22	
Issue 6 Socioeconomics	Planning	22	Does the application include organized events or promotional activities that would utilize funded trails?	(Y)	Go to #22a	✓
				N	Go to #23	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		19e	Has the Natural Heritage vegetation list for the proposed region been submitted (NRIS - State Lib)?	Y	Go to #19f	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 19f	
		19f	Does the Natural Heritage list identify any rare or endangered plant species?	Y	Go to #19g	
				N	Go to #20	
		19g	Are any species on the list common in alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19h	
				N	Go to #19j	
		19h	Do any proposed trails that are not on existing roads cross alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19i	
				N	Go to #19j	
		19i	Are there alternatives to crossing the alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19j	
				N	Reject	
		19j	Do any proposed activities involve areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #19k	
				N	Go to #20	
		19k	Are there viable alternatives to avoid areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #20	
				N	Go to #19l	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
	Signing	16	Have signing strategies been proposed to identify idle zones?	(Y)	Go to #17	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #17	
	Public awareness plan	17	Has a public awareness plan been established?	(Y)	Go to #18	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #18	
	Clearance Oversight	18	Did applicant supply info and wildlife clearance with application?	(Y)	Go to #19	✓
				N	Request	
Issue 5 Vegetation	Maps identifying proposed trails and facilities	19	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #19a	✓
				N	Request	
		19a	Is the proposed trail/facility located entirely on an existing road or trail?	(Y)	Go to #20	✓
				N	Go to #19b	
		19b	Have existing roads been used whenever possible?	Y	Go to #19c	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 19c	
		19c	Does all or a portion of trails occur on a vegetated road or trail?	Y	Go to #19e	
				N	Go to #19e	
		19d	Does all or a portion of proposed activity occur on undeveloped land?	Y	Go to #19d	
				N	Go to #20	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
	Idle Zones	15	Are there known bald eagle nests or grizzly hibernation areas?	Y	Go to #15a	✓
				(N)	Go to #15d	
		15a	Are trails proposed near any of these sites?	Y	Go to #15b	
				N	Go to #15d	
		15b	Are viable alternatives identified that avoid these areas?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #15d	
				N	Go to #15c	
		15c	Have idle zones been proposed for these areas?	Y	Go to #15d	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #15d	
		15d	Has the Natural Heritage wildlife list for the proposed region been submitted (NRIS - State library)?	(Y)	Go to #15e	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
		15e	Does the Natural Heritage list identify any rare or endangered wildlife species in the area of the proposal?	(Y)	Go to #15f	✓
				N	Go to #16	
		15f	Has applicant submitted an avoidance or seasonal restriction plan or other appropriate mitigative measures for these areas?	(Y)	Go to #16	✓
				N	Request Submittal	15f

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
	Avoidance	13f	Is the trail length along the periphery of the wintering area the least possible?	(Y)	Go to #13g	✓
				N	Revise Plan	
		13g	Was vegetative screening used whenever possible?	(Y)	Go to #13h	✓
				N	Revise to utilize veg screen	
		13h	Has signing plan been proposed to keep snowmobilers from disturbing wintering ungulates?	(Y)	Go to #14	✓
				N	Request Plan	
	Seasonal Restrictions	14	Are there ungulate wintering areas in grizzly bear habitat?	(Y)	Go to #14a	✓
				N	Go to #15	14
		14a	Are there proposed trails near these areas?	(Y)	Go to #14b	✓
				N	Go to #15	
		14b	Have seasonal restrictions in these areas been identified?	(Y)	Go to #14c	✓
				n	Stipulate - Go to #14c	
		14c	Has a signing plan been proposed to mark restricted areas?	(Y)	Go to #15	✓
				N	Stipulate - Go to #15	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		11c	Is construction of temporary crossing structures viable in the proposed crossing location?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #12	
				N	Reject	
	Public Awareness Plan	12	Has applicant submitted a public awareness plan?	(Y)	Go to #13	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
Issue 4 Wildlife	Map identifying proposed activities	13	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #13a	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
		13a	Are there known ungulate wintering areas in the vicinity of proposed trails?	(Y)	Go to #13b	✓
				N	Go to #14	
		13b	Are there ungulate wintering areas identified on the map?	(Y)	Go to #13c	✓
				N	Request Submittal	
		13c	Do proposed trails remain on the periphery of winter ranges?	(Y)	Go to #13f	✓
				N	Go to #13d	
		13d	Does proposed trail pass through wintering areas?	(Y)	Go to #13e	✓
				N	Go to #13h	13 d
		13e	Is there a viable alternate route available for use?	Y	Go to #13f	✓
				(N)	Reject	13 e

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATING AGREEMENT

Between

LINCOLN COUNTY SNO-KATS SNOWMOBILE CLUB

and

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

and

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST - USDA FOREST SERVICE

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into by and between the Lincoln County Sno-kats Snowmobile Club, a non-profit organization in the State of Montana, hereinafter refered to as the Club; the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, State of Montana, hereinafter refered to as the Department; and the Rexford, Three Rivers, and Libby Ranger Districts, Kootenai National Forest, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, hereinafter refered to as the Forest Service, (collectively refered to as the Cooperators) under the provisions of Montana, Code 23, Chapter 2, and the Acts of June 30,1914 (16 USC 498) and June 12, 1960. (16 USC 580).

WITNESSETH:

1. The Forest Service is responsible for the National Forests' recreation resources and their being available for public use and enjoyment, and

2. Managed and maintained snowmobile trails identified on the approved Annual Operating Plan and Map need to be groomed to provide snowmobilers with a safer and more enjoyable recreation experience, and

3. The Club is interested in assisting in the maintenance and operation of snowmobile facilities and activities on the land administered by the Forest Service, for use by Club members as well as the general public, and

4. The Department controls State funds earmarked for the development and maintenance of snowmobile trails and desires to cooperate with the Forest Service and the Club in the development and maintenance of snowmobile facilities on the land administered by the Forest Service, and

5. The general public will benefit from the three parties cooperating in the providing for these recreation facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the above premises the parties hereto agree as follows:

A. THE CLUB SHALL:

1. Meet with the Department to develop an Annual Operating Plan and Map showing grooming routes, schedules, signing and Club officers. The Club shall provide copies to the Department, and in turn the Department shall provide copies to the Forest Service by May 1 of each year.

2. Erect and maintain at the trailhead and at strategic points along the trails necessary signing. Signing needs shall be detailed in the Annual Operating Plan and shall meet Forest Service standards. Signing will include trail signs, two way traffic signs, speed limit signs where necessary, orange plastic diamond signs, directional signs showing locations, directions, lengths, and difficulty, and any other pertinent warning or informational signs. Signs approved by the Department shall be purchase by the Department and installed by the Club. All signs, except plastic orange diamond signs, placed by the Club shall be removed and stored by the Club at the end of the snow season.

3. Perform such trail maintenance and marking as may be necessary to keep the trails safe and usable.

4. Provide trail grooming periodically, depending upon the suitability of snow conditions for snowmobiling and availability of funds in their snowmobile trail grooming budget.

5. Bill the Department at the end of each grooming month for costs of grooming. The Club may request an advance of funds by writing the Department at least two weeks prior to need for funds. Total of advances and bills shall not exceed the annual grant amount for any snow season. The Club shall itemize all expenditures and include documentation as required by the Department

6. Meet annually or more often with the other parties to this agreement to coordinate activities pursuant to this agreement.

7. Hold the Department and Forest Service harmless from and indemnify them from and against all liability for injuries to or death of persons or damage to property arising from the negligent or reckless acts of its employees or agents in carrying out the terms of this agreement. The Club shall have in force liability insurance as required by state law.

8. Follow the most stringent requirement should a conflict arise between this Development and Operating Agreement and any other approved Land Use Document, Regulation, Law, or Policy.

9. Promote and encourage all snowmobilers to use good snowmobiling ethics, including such things as not approaching or chasing big game animals, giving skiers the right of way, maintaining litter free trails and play areas, and not damaging seedlings in plantations.

10. Abide by special Forest Supervisor Orders signed in accordance to 36 CFR 261.50.

B. THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL

1. Allow its lands, in the areas indicated on the approved Annual Operating Plan and Map, to be used for snowmobiling.

2. Allow the Club, upon review and approval by the Forest Service and the Department of detailed Annual Operating Plans, to improve trails by machine grading, cutting brush and small timber, minor bridge construction and other improvements as may be necessary.

3. Meet annually or more often with other parties to this agreement for the purpose of coordination activities undertaken pursuant to this agreement.

4. When and if funds are available, make orange plastic blades available to the Club for trail marking.

5. Maintain trailhead signs and help Club coordinate plowing.

C. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL.

1. Reimburse the Club for the costs it incurs for grooming trails not to exceed the annual grant amount per snow season. Costs shall be based upon rates established through negotiation with local contractors by the Club. The Department will have no liability for charges in excess of the annual grant amount per snow season, unless within the sole discretion of Department it is determined that sufficient additional funds exist in the Snowmobile Trail Grooming Account. If funds are available in that account grooming costs may be reimbursed after the maximum charge of the annual grant amount has been incurred by the Club; provided, however, that such reimbursement shall be at the sole discretion of the Department.

2. Monitor the Club for performance standards and safety, and periodically report to the Forest Service the adequacy of Club performance.

3. Meet annually or more often with other parties to this agreement for the purpose of coordinating activities undertaken pursuant to this agreement.

4. Maintain and enforce guidelines of grooming according to USDA FSH 2309.18 Trails Handbook and appropriate Department standards.

5. Present to the Forest Service for its approval a copy of the Club's Annual Operating Plan and Map prior to May 1 of each year.

6. When securing the insurance for the Club, provide a copy of the policy to the Club and the Forest Service.

D. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT:

1. Any proposed development or betterment projects will be jointly agreed to by the Cooperators prior to their initiation.

2. Nothing herein shall be construed as binding the Cooperators for the payment of money beyond the current fiscal year unless a financial plan for subsequent years has been approved by the Cooperators.

3. No contributions herein provided for shall entitle the Club or the Department to any share or interest in the said facilities other than the right to use the same under the regulations of the Forest Service. All improvements shall be and remain the property of the United States.

4. Permission to work on National Forest Lands under the terms of this Agreement do not in any way convey to the Club or the Department, their officials, or any person or persons working with the Forest Service in the performance of said work, employee status that would extend to them the benefits of the Federal Employees Compensation Act, as amended.

5. The snowmobile trails and facilities will be open to the general public. The Club and the Department will in no way control access to or use of the trails or improvements.

6. No member of, or delegate to, Congress or Resident Commissioner shall be admitted to any share or part of this Agreement, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom; but this provision shall not be construed to extend to this Agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

7. Cooperators will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) and in accordance with Title VI of that Act, no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Cooperators receive Federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate this Agreement.

8. The Club and the Department shall indemnify the United States against any liability for damage to life or property arising from the occupancy or use of National Forest lands under this Agreement, providing such damage to life or property is due to the negligent acts or omissions of the Club or Department.

9. This Agreement may be revised as necessary, by mutual consent of all parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties.

10. The rights and obligations of any party to this agreement may be terminated upon the giving of thirty (30) days written notice by that party. Unless terminated sooner by written notice, this agreement shall expire at midnight on June 30, 1997.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the last date written below.

LINCOLN COUNTY SNO-KATS SNOWMOBILE CLUB

BY Gerald E. Nixon

TITLE Pres.

DATE 9-16-94

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

BY [illegible]

TITLE Reg 1 Supv.

DATE 10/21/94

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST, FOREST SERVICE

BY [illegible]

TITLE 26 OCT 94 FOREST SUPERVISOR

DATE

SNOWMOBILE EQUIPMENT LEASE APPENDIX A.4

THIS EQUIPMENT LEASE made this _____, between the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS, herein referred to as "the Department", and Lincoln County Sno-Nats _____, County of Lincoln _____, State of Montana, herein referred to as "the Club".

For the considerations set forth herein, the Department hereby leases to the Club and the Club hires from the Department all those items of equipment named and described in Schedule 1, attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof, or as described in any subsequent schedules which may hereafter be made a part hereof, hereinafter referred to as "the equipment", at such rate and for such periods of time as are stated in said schedule or schedules, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Location of Equipment. The equipment shall be located in or near Libby Ranger Dist. as per State Purchase Order No. _____ during all the lease period, and shall not be removed from the location without Department prior written consent.

2. Care of Equipment. The Club shall use the equipment in a careful and proper manner and shall comply with all laws, ordinances, and regulations relating to the possession, use, or maintenance of the equipment. When a limitation on use accompanies the identification and description of particular items of equipment in the attached schedule or schedules, the Club shall use such items of equipment only for the stated use.

3. Operation of Equipment. The Department will provide for the registration and licensing of equipment under this lease wherever required. The Club shall permit the equipment to be operated only by competent and qualified individuals, and shall ensure that the equipment is not subjected to careless or needless rough usage.

4. Identification of Equipment. If at any time the Department supplies the Club with labels, plates, or other markings stating that the property is owned by the Department, the Club shall affix and keep the same in a prominent place on the property. The Club may not alter, disfigure, or cover up any marks of identification displayed on the equipment.

5. Alterations. The Club agrees that it will make no alterations in the equipment without obtaining prior permission from the Department. All additions to and improvements of the equipment of any kind shall immediately become the property of the Department unless specified otherwise and subject to the terms of this lease.

6. Maintenance and Repair. The Club agrees to keep the equipment in as good or better repair and operating condition as when first received by the Club, minus normal and reasonable operating wear and tear.

7. The Department's Right of Inspection. The Department shall have the right to enter the premises occupied by the equipment and shall be given free access thereto and afforded necessary facilities for the purpose of inspection.

8. Return of Equipment. On expiration of the term specified in the attached schedule or schedules for any particular item of equipment, the Club agrees to deliver at its own expense the said item in good condition, and free and clear of encumbrances to the Department's Regional Office in _____ or to such other location as the Department may designate that does not increase the cost of delivery.

9. The Club's Option to Terminate. The Club, if not in default in any obligation hereunder, may terminate this lease with respect to any item of equipment leased at any time on 30 days' written notice to the Department.

10. The Club's Option to Renew. The Club may renew this lease with respect to any item of property at the expiration of the term specified for such item in the attached schedule or schedules for an additional period of one year on the conditions, provisions and forms as mutually agreed upon by the parties. Should the Club desire to exercise its option to renew the lease with respect to a particular item of equipment, it shall give the Department written notice, by May 1st preceding the termination date, of its intention to exercise the option herein granted.

11. Risk of Loss or Damage. The Club hereby assumes all risks of loss of and damage to the equipment from any cause, and agrees to return it to the Department in as good or better condition as when received, minus reasonable wear and tear. No loss of or damage to the equipment shall impair any obligation of the Club under this lease, and all such obligations shall continue in full force and effect until otherwise discharged.

12. Indemnity of the Department for Loss or Damage. In event of loss or damage to the equipment, excepting normal and reasonable operating wear and tear, the Club at the option of the Department shall:

a. place the same in good repair;
b. replace the same with like equipment in good repair, which equipment shall thereupon become the property of the Department and subject to this lease; or
c. pay the Department therefore in cash the termination value of the equipment as specified in the attached schedule or schedules.

Upon payment by the Club of the termination value of lost or damaged equipment, pursuant to Paragraph c of this section, this lease shall terminate with respect to said items of equipment so paid for and the Club thereupon shall become entitled thereto, as owner thereof.

13. Liability and Indemnity for Personal Injuries. Liability for injury, disability, and death of workmen and other persons caused by the operation, handling, or transportation of the equipment during the term shall be assumed by the Club and the Club shall indemnify the Department against all such liability.

14. The Club's Duty to Insure. The Club shall at all times keep the equipment insured in the amount of at least the termination value of each item of equipment as specified in the attached schedule(s) for all such risks as the Department shall require, including but not limited to comprehensive and collision insurance; and the Club has further maintained comprehensive general liability insurance policy for the amount of at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00). The liability policy will be purchased by the Department with Club funds.

15. Taxes and Fees. The Department shall pay all taxes, assessments, and license and registration fees on said equipment during the term of the lease.

16. Events Constituting Defaults. The following events constitute defaults:

a. the nonperformance by the Club of any other covenant or condition or provision of this lease which is not cured within 15 days after notice thereof from the Department;
b. any affirmative act of insolvency by the Club, or the filing by the Club of any petition under any bankruptcy, reorganization, insolvency, or moratorium law, or any law for the relief of, or relating to, debtors, or dissolution of the Club;
c. the filing of any involuntary petition under any bankruptcy statute against the Club, or the appointment of any receiver or trustee to take possession of the property of the Club, unless such petition or appointment is set aside or withdrawn or ceases to be in effect within 20 days of the date of the filing or appointment;
d. the subjection of any of the Club's property to any levy, seizure, assignment, application, or sale for or by any creditor or governmental agency.

17. The Department's Rights Upon Default. On the occurrence of any of the events constituting defaults, the Department may without notice to or demand on the Club:

a. take possession of the equipment and lease the same or any portion thereof, for such period and such rental, and to such persons, as the Department elects, and apply the proceeds of any such renting, after deducting all costs and expenses incurred in connection with the recovery, repair, storage, and renting of the equipment in payment of the rent and other obligations due from the Club to the Department hereunder, the Club remaining responsible for any deficiency; or

b. take possession of the equipment and sell it or any portion thereof at public or private sale without demand or notice of intention to sell, and apply the proceeds of any such sale, after deducting all costs and expenses incurred in connection with the recovery, repair, storage, and sale of the equipment and any rentals and other obligations of the Club then due hereunder, against the termination value of the equipment sold as specified in the schedule or schedules attached. If the proceeds, after the permitted deduction, are less than the termination value so determined, the Club shall immediately pay the Department the difference.

20. Law of Lease. This lease shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the State of Montana.

21. Venue will be in Lewis and Clark County should any legal action arise from this agreement.

22. Status of Equipment. The equipment leased hereunder is, and will at all times remain, personal property, notwithstanding that it or any part of it may be, or hereafter become, in any manner attached to, or embedded in, or permanently resting on, real property or improvements thereon.

23. Ownership of Equipment. Title to the equipment shall at all times remain in the Department unless transferred to the Club by sale and the Club shall have only the right to retain the possession of said equipment pursuant to the conditions hereof. The Club shall give the Department immediate notice of any claim, lien, or legal process issued against the equipment.

24. Limitation of Effects of Waivers. No delay or omission to exercise any right, power, or remedy accruing to the Department on any breach or default by the Club under this lease will impair any such right power, or remedy of the Department, nor shall it be construed to be a waiver of any such breach or default, or an acquiescence therein, of any similar breach or default thereafter occurring; nor shall any waiver of any single breach or default be deemed a waiver of any other breach or default theretofore or thereafter occurring.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has caused its name to be subscribed and duly authorized, and Lincoln County Sno-Kats has caused its name to be subscribed and duly authorized on the day and year first above written.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

By Marty Waltners

490 N. Meridian

Kalispell, MT 59901

By: _____

_____

Address

ATTEST:

By: _____

_____

Address

415/4.1a

29. Assignment. The Club shall not assign this lease or any equipment leased herein, or any interest in said lease or equipment, without the Department's written consent. The Club shall not sublet the equipment herein, or any item of it, without the Department's written consent.

The Department may assign this lease or any rights thereunder without the Club's consent; but the Department shall not because of the assignment be excused from performing any of its obligations and duties hereunder.

34. Lease Applicable to Successors and Assigns. The Department and the Club agree that the rights and obligations under this lease shall insure to and be binding on their respective successors and assigns, subject, however, to the provisions of Section 29.

35. Attorneys' Fees. In the event that any action is filed in relation to this lease, the unsuccessful party in the action shall pay to the successful party, in addition to all other sums that either party may be called on to pay, a reasonable sum for the successful party's attorneys' fees.

36. Grant for Maintenance. The Club agrees to use all funds provided by separate grant of snowmobile funds under conditions and terms as set forth thereon to fulfill terms and conditions of this lease.

37. Severability. This lease embodies the entire agreement between the parties. It may not be modified or terminated except as provided herein or by other written agreement. If any provision herein is invalid it shall be considered deleted herefrom and shall not invalidate the remaining provisions.

38. Execution of Lease. This lease is not binding until executed by a proper officer of the Department at its offices in Helena, and until the acceptance by the Club of the terms and conditions of the grant referred to in Section 36.

39. Termination of Lease. Unless otherwise terminated, this lease will continue in force until all of the equipment specified in the attached schedule or schedules has been ultimately disposed of by return to the Department or other authorized disposal, and until all of the obligations of the parties hereto have been discharged.

30. Warranties. The Department makes no warranties, express or implied, as to the equipment leased, and assumes no responsibility for its condition.

31. Notices. Any notice to be given under this lease shall be mailed to the party to be notified at the address set forth herein, by registered or certified mail with postage prepaid, and shall be deemed given when so made.

EQUIPMENT LEASE SCHEDULE APPENDIX A.5

Equipment Item described below leased pursuant to the attached equipment lease made December 1, 1996, between Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Lincoln County Sno-hats of Libby and Troy, County of Lincoln, State of Montana.

1. Common name of lease item: Groomer and Implement

2. Manufacture's trade name of leased item: Dmc / Marx TBM-037 groomer

3. Serial number of leased item: TG-88-mmc-173 Implement

4. Manufacturer of leased item: Dmc Marx

5. Condition of leased item: Groomer needs repair

6. Purchase price of leased item: _____

7. The term of lease on this item of equipment is one year commencing _____.

8. The annual lease rate of this item of equipment is one dollar ($1.00) payable in advance for the term of the lease.

   All rentals shall be paid by the Club to Fish, Wildlife and Parks at its address set forth in the above-mentioned lease or to such other person or organizations as Fish, Wildlife and Parks shall designate in writing.

9. This item of equipment may be used only for maintenance of snowmobile facilities open to the general public at no admission cost.

This schedule is approved and agreed to on _____, and the item of equipment described is herein made subject to the above-mentioned lease.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

By: Marty Wallace

By: _____

eqplease.sch Rev. 12-89

LINCOLN COUNTY SNO-KATS
1995-1996 Season Groomer Repair
and Volunteer Labor

Date		Total Hours
Nov. 1995	David repair time on track and groomer Crew of six gathered to help with track and put new planking on truck	147
Dec. 1995	David repair time on groomer	87
Jan. 1996	David repair time on groomer	46.5
Mar. 1996	Jackie and Nancy Sno-Kats reports and paper work	10
Nov.-Mar.	Jackie monthly paying of bills and records	10

Total Repair Time 280.5

Total paper Work 20

WINTER RECREATION OBSERVATION 1995-1996
Libby Area

DATE	AREA	SNOWMOBILES IN PARTY	SNOWMOBILES OBSERVED	OTHER REC.
	QUARTZ, BIG FOOT 17 MILE RD.			
01-01-96		3		
01-20-96		23	6	1
01-21-96		14	6	
02-04-96		10	10	
02-17-96		10	6	
02-24-96		7		
02-25-96		109 * 2nd Annual Poker Run		
03-17-96		3	8	
03-18-96		3	6	
	COPELAND, HORSE LAKE			
01-27-96		21		
02-11-96		7	3	
	PURCELL, EAST FORK BALDY MTN			
01-21-96		17		
03-03-96		20		
	HOWARD LAKE			
03-30-96		4		
	PETE CREEK			
03-15-96		9		
	BLUE MTN, NOISY CREEK			
01-04-96		4		
01-28-96		7	4	
02-06-96		3		
03-22-96		3		
03-31-96		12		

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Kootenai NF Libby RD | 1263 Highway 37 Libby, MT 59923

Reply to: 2350/7730

Date: March 26, 1996

Jackalyne Drake, Secretary/Treasurer
Lincoln County SNO-KATS
P.O. Box 1180
Libby, MT 59923

Dear Jackalyne,

Thank you for your letter of March 21, 1996 requesting permission to groom roads on Libby District for snowmobile use. Consider this letter as approval for your club to groom the eight roads listed in your letter. As in the past, we are concerned with the grooming you propose on the Quartz Mountain Road #4654 (North half only). Our concern here is for the safety of grooming operations and riders. This concern can be mitigated by ceasing grooming at the "lunch knoll" near the center of Section 10, T32N, R32W. This avoids roads on very steep slopes that fill-in with snow thus obscurring the road prism.

The Purcell road #112 may be plowed for timber sale access on the Rexford Ranger District next winter. We will know for sure as we approach that season. If you have any questions in this matter, please contact Jon Jeresek at Libby Ranger Station.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE A. FROBERG
District Ranger

Lincoln County Sno-Kats
P. O. Box 1180
Libby, MT 59923

March 21, 1996

Kootenai National Forest
Rexford Ranger District
1299 Highway 93 North
Eureka, MT 59917

Bob Thompson, District Ranger

Dear Sir:

The Lincoln County SNO-KATS CLUB is again requesting permission to groom roads in your district.

These roads are:

Lawerence Mt. Road	# 250-255
Big Creek Road	# 336
Copeland-Drop Creek Road	# 7183
Lost Horse Mt. Road	# 665

We would like to work with you on making Big Creek Road # 336 and Garden Ridge Road # 255 a loop trail. Or maybe Roads # 255, #2554 and # 254 would be an alternative.

We would be more than happy to come to Eureka and talk to you about extending our trail system.

Sincerely,

Lincoln County Sno-Kats

Jackalyne Drake
Secr. Treas.

I have heard no reply from Mr Thompson

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Three Rivers Ranger District
Kootenai NF
1437 N. Hwy 2
Troy, MT 59935

Reply to: 2310

Date: April 22, 1996

Lincoln County Sno-Kats
Attention: Jackalyne Drake
P.O. Box 1180
Libby, Montana 59923

This letter is approval of your request to groom Keeler Rattle Road #473, Spread Creek Road #435, Pete Creek Road #338 and Fowler Creek Road #6065. Approval is also granted for the Beetle Creek road junction with Spread Creek and Pete Creek, Road #748. The hazard and warning signs will need to be installed once again at any hazards and road intersections.

It will be necessary to contact the District prior to grooming the Fowler Creek Road next season. As you are aware there will be timber harvest activities going on in the fire area during the winter of 1996/97.

I would appreciate a list showing the number of times each road was groomed during the 1995/96 season.

I would like to thank the Lincoln County Sno-Kats for their support and continued efforts on the Three River Ranger District and Kootenai National Forest.

If you have any questions on this please contact Mark Mason at this office.

Michael L Balboni

MICHAEL L. BALBONI
District Ranger

cc:B.Krepps:SO
B.Fansler:SO
J.Jeresek:D5
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Lincoln County SNO-KATS
P. O. Box 1180
Libby, MT 59923

March 21, 1996

Kootenai National Forest
Libby Ranger District
Highway 37 North
Libby, MT 59923

Larry Froberg, District Ranger

Dear Sir:

The Lincoln County SNO-KATS Club is again requesting permission to groom roads in your District.

These roads are:

Seventeen Mile Road	# 471
Lower Quartz Creek Road	# 600
Quartz Cr.-Ransom Cr. Road	# 4654
East Fork Pipe Creek Road	# 336
Baldy Mountain Road	# 309-4731
Dark Purcell Road	# 112-6783

We would like to thank your District for the cooperation you have shown the SNO-KATS Club in trying to improve our grooming program.

Sincerely,

Lincoln County SNO-KATS

Jackalyne Drake
Secr. Treas.

Lincoln County SNO-KATS
P. O. Box 1180
Libby, MT 59923

March 21, 1996

Kootenai National Forest
Three Rivers Ranger District
1437 North Highway 2
Troy, MT 59935

Michael L. Balboni, District Ranger

Dear Sir:

The Lincoln County SNO-KATS Club is again requesting permission to groom roads in your district.

These roads are:

Keeler Creek Road	# 473
Pete Creek Road	# 338
North Cr.-Beetle Cr. Road	# 748
Spread Creek Road	# 435
Fowler Creek Road	# 6065

We would like to thank your District for the cooperation you have shown in helping the Lincoln County SNO-KATS in trying to develop a grooming program.

Sincerely,

Lincoln County SNO-KATS

Jackalyne Drake

Jackalyne Drake
Secr. Treas.

LINCOLN COUNTY SNO-KATS

Goals and Objectives

- To provide for family winter outdoor recreation opportunities.
- To provide safe access for winter snowmobile recreation in the Kootenai National Forest.
- To develop standards of safety and survival skills.
- To provide groomed snowmobile trails for easy access into the winter wonder-land of the Kootenai National Forest.
- To provide for family winter snow-play events.
- To provide local weather information for the trail users.

DRAFT

SAFETY PLAN

Lincoln County Sno-Kats

A. With guidance from the "Montana snowmobile Safety and You" program, conduct a safety program at the regular club business meetings

1. Topics covered may include:

   a. First Aid
   b. Survival equipment
   c. Avalanche awareness
   d. Know the area
   e. Know the weather conditions
   f. Machine capabilities
   g. Other topics as needed

B. Search and Rescue

1. Club members make themselves available as needed by the local Search and Rescue organization. Some club members of this organization.
2. Comply with all directions and regulations set down by authoritative organization of the search and rescue process.

C. Accident Reporting

1. All known accidents will be reported to State and local law enforcement agency responsible for collecting such information, where personal injury occurs to any person or where property damage exceeds $100,000.

2. Accident reports shall be furnished to FWP.

D. Bulletin Boards

1. Location: All trailhead parking lots

2. Will contain:

   a. Avalanche advisory number 1-800-526-5329
   b. Garbage disposal polices - Pack-It-In/Pack-It-Out
   c. Animal awareness notice, what to do when encountering an animal - Do Not Chase policy
   d. Idle zone at trailhead for safety reasons

AIR QUALITY

In club meetings, Air Quality mitigation measures will be discussed. Examples include:

1. Keeping engines turned to manufactures' specification
2. Use biodegradable oil

VEGETATION

In club meetings, discuss the awareness of noxious weeds and methods to prevent their spread. Wash machines that have been set out all summer to rid them of weed seed.

WATER QUALITY

Do not fill fuel tanks near stream crossing or other bodies of water. Encourage use of biodegradable oil to aid in reduction of water contamination.

WILDERNESS

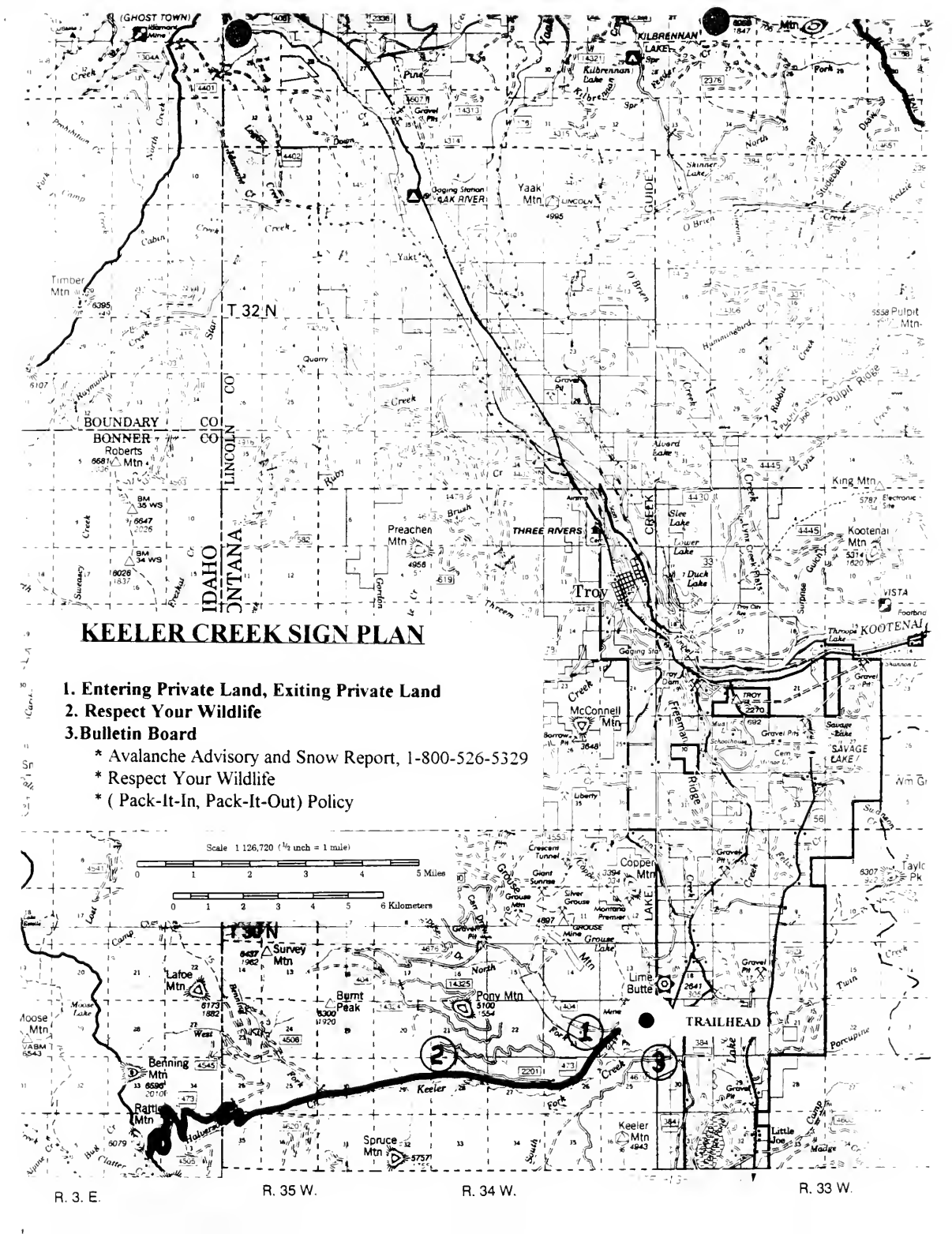
There are no Wilderness Areas within the immediate vicinity of any of the snowmobile trails. One trailhead, Kester, is located 4½ miles west of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness; however, there is a major highway between the two, and the groomed trailheads to the west away from the Wilderness, reducing or eliminating potential conflicts Spread/Pete Creek trail passes within half mile of Northwest Peak Service Area, but does not create any problems.

WILDLIFE

Trail grooming dates have been established with comments from FWP and USFS to insure that T & E species are not adversely affected. Potential trails have been restricted from grooming due to endangerment to some animals. State and Forest Service wildlife biologists have given their approval to the selected groomed trail system.

EVENTS

Two club events "Fun Days" are scheduled during the year. It is estimated that approximately 100 snowmobilers will attend these events. No additional employees are needed and the club Safety Plan will be in effect.


KEELER CREEK SIGN PLAN
1. Entering Private Land, Exiting Private Land
2. Respect Your Wildlife
3.Bulletin Board
* Avalanche Advisory and Snow Report, 1-800-526-5329
* Respect Your Wildlife
* (Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out) Policy
Scale 1 126,720 (1/2 inch = 1 mile)
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Kilometers
T 32 N
T 30 N
R. 3. E.
R. 35 W.
R. 34 W.
R. 33 W.
BOUNDARY CO
BONNER CO
LINCOLN CO
IDAHO
MONTANA
TRAILHEAD
1
2
3
Troy
THREE RIVERS
KILBRENNAN LAKE
Yaak Mtn.
Timber Mtn.
Roberts Mtn.
Preachen Mtn.
McConnell Mtn.
Copper Mtn.
Lime Butte
Pony Mtn.
Burnt Peak
Survey Mtn.
Latoe Mtn.
Benning Mtn.
Rattle Mtn.
Spruce Mtn.
Keeler Mtn.
Little Joe
Moose Mtn.
King Mtn.
Kootenai Mtn.
Pulpit Mtn.
Taylor Pk.
Keeler
Yaak River
Pine Creek
Lake Creek
Ruby Creek
Quarry
Gravel Pit
Lookout
Ranger Station
Gaging Station
Campground
Cemetery
Schoolhouse
Mine
Tunnel
Dam
Airstrip
Electronic Site
Footbridge
Lookout Pass Ski Area
Kilbrennan Lake
Skinner Lake
Alvord Lake
Slee Lake
Lower Duck Lake
Upper Duck Lake
Throup Lake
Savage Lake
Grouse Lake
Twin Lakes
Mirror Lake
Liberty
Troy Dam
Troy Cem.
Troy Gravel Pits
Grouse Mine
Montana Premier
Crescent Tunnel
Giant Summit
Silver Grouse
Grouse Mine Mtn.
Lime Butte Mine
Porcupine Lake
Little Joe Mine
Keeler Fork
Keeler Creek
Pony Creek
Twin Creek
Porcupine Creek
Lime Butte Creek
Grouse Creek
Copper Creek
Yaak River
Pulpit Ridge
Freemal Ridge
Surprise Gulch
Lynx Creek
Hummingbird Creek
Rubus Creek
Brush Creek
Thrasher Creek
Star Creek
Timber Creek
Cabin Creek
Quarry Creek
Ramrod Creek
Stanley Creek
Pinkham Creek
Fisher Creek
Gordon Creek
Pickhandle Creek
Alpine Creek
Bull Clatter Creek
Halverson Creek
Camp Creek
Loop Creek
Lake Creek
Twin Creek
Porcupine Creek
Lime Butte Creek
Grouse Creek
Copper Creek
Yaak River
Pulpit Ridge
Freemal Ridge
Surprise Gulch
Lynx Creek
Hummingbird Creek
Rubus Creek
Brush Creek
Thrasher Creek
Star Creek
Timber Creek
Cabin Creek
Quarry Creek
Ramrod Creek
Stanley Creek
Pinkham Creek
Fisher Creek
Gordon Creek
Pickhandle Creek
Alpine Creek
Bull Clatter Creek
Halverson Creek
Camp Creek
Loop Creek
Lake Creek
Twin Creek
Porcupine Creek
Lime Butte Creek
Grouse Creek
Copper Creek
Yaak River
Pulpit Ridge
Freemal Ridge
Surprise Gulch
Lynx Creek
Hummingbird Creek
Rubus Creek
Brush Creek
Thrasher Creek
Star Creek
Timber Creek
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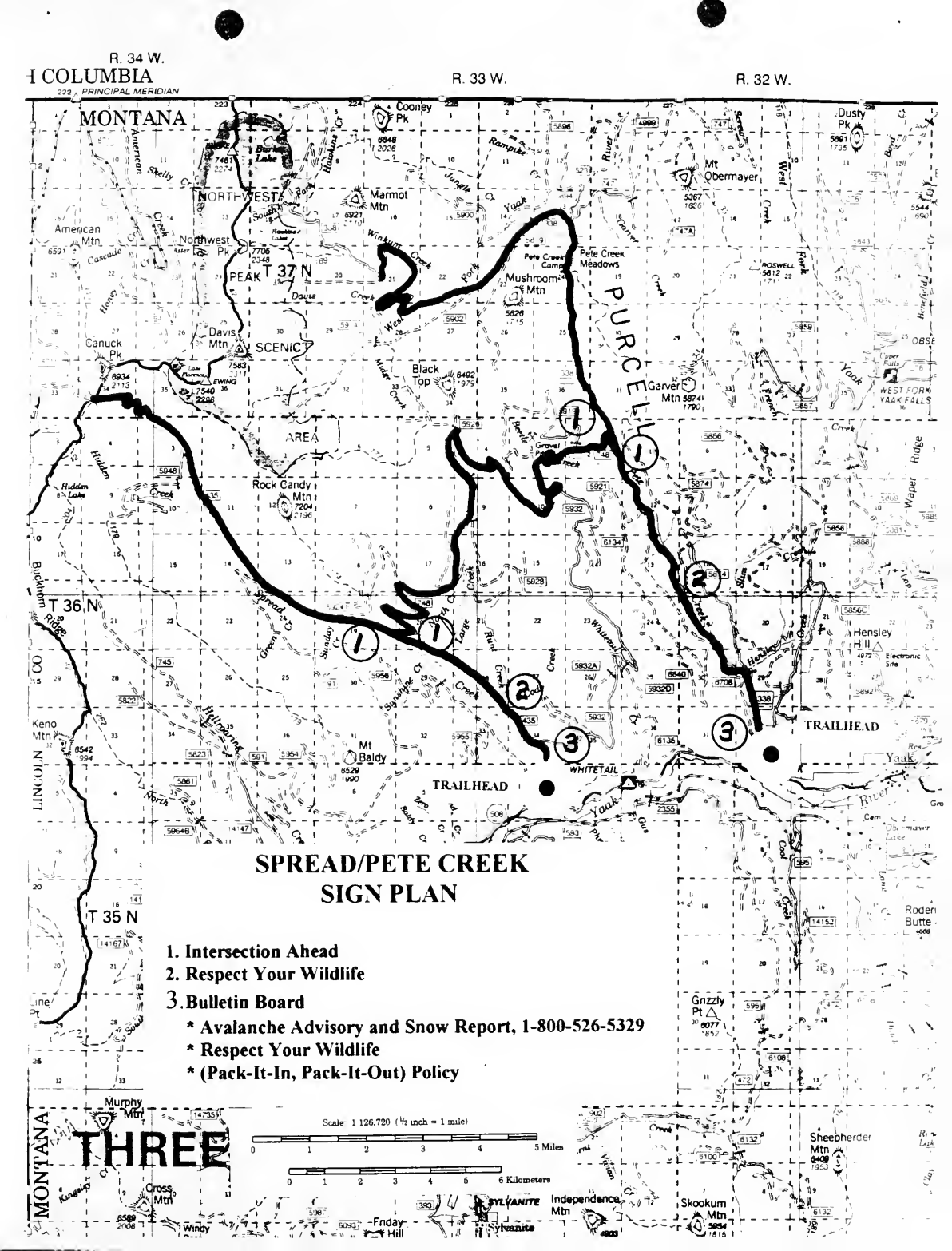
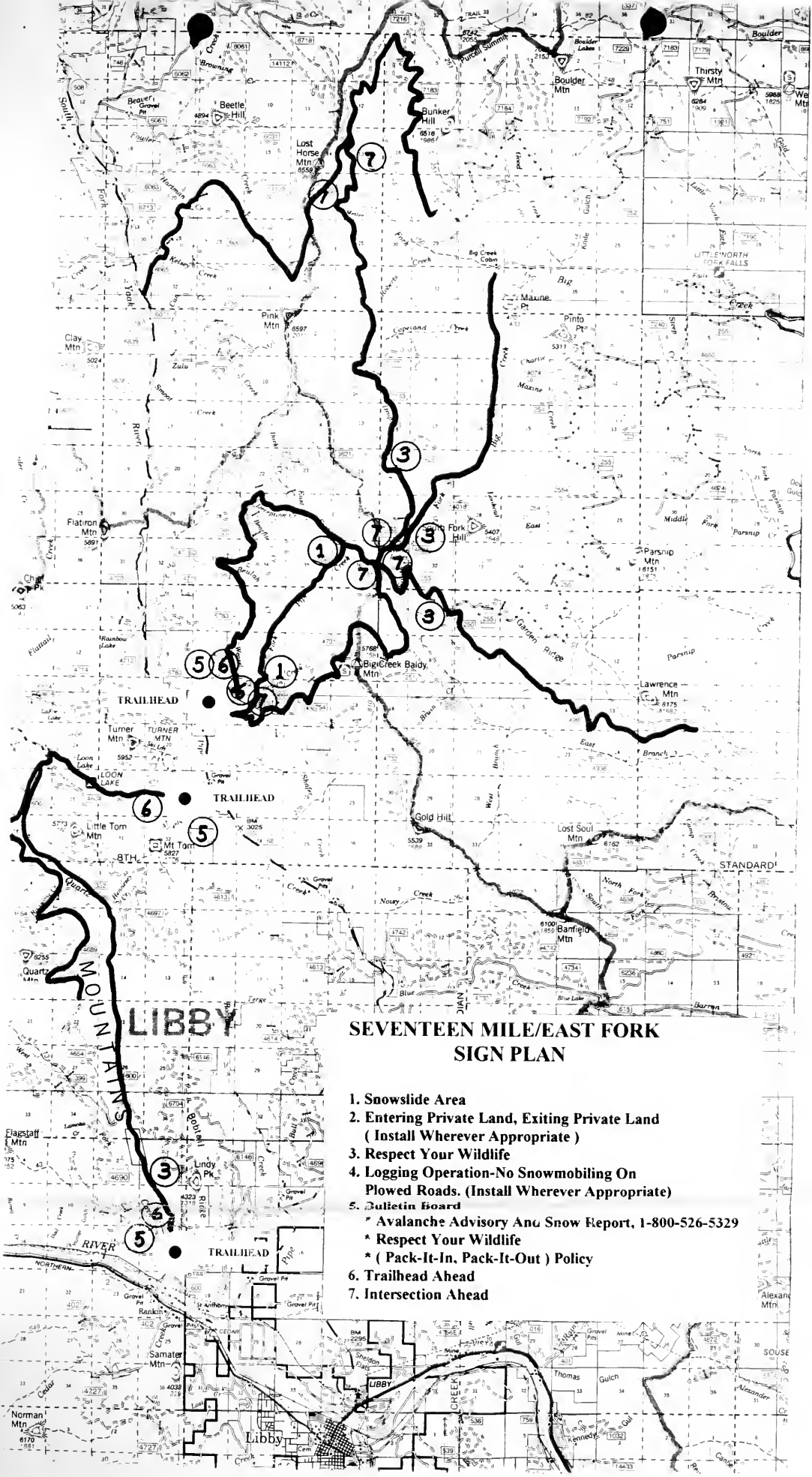
Quarry Creek
Ramrod Creek
Stanley Creek
Pinkham Creek
Fisher Creek
Gordon Creek
Pickhandle Creek
Alpine Creek
Bull Clatter Creek
Halverson Creek
Camp Creek
Loop Creek



SPREAD/PETE CREEK SIGN PLAN

1. **Intersection Ahead**
2. **Respect Your Wildlife**
3. **Bulletin Board**
   - *** Avalanche Advisory and Snow Report, 1-800-526-5329**
   - *** Respect Your Wildlife**
   - *** (Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out) Policy**



SEVENTEEN MILE/EAST FORK SIGN PLAN

1. Snowslide Area
2. Entering Private Land, Exiting Private Land
   (Install Wherever Appropriate)
3. Respect Your Wildlife
4. Logging Operation-No Snowmobiling On
   Plowed Roads. (Install Wherever Appropriate)
5. Bulletin Board
   - Avalanche Advisory And Snow Report, 1-800-526-5329
   - Respect Your Wildlife
   - (Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out) Policy
6. Trailhead Ahead
7. Intersection Ahead

APPENDIX B

Emissions of Air Pollutants

DRAFT

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

RECEIVED
JUL 25 1995
W & P REGION ONE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 24, 1995

TO: Marty Watkins and Region Park Managers

FROM: Bob Walker, State Trails Program Coordinator

SUBJECT: Snowmobile Grant PEIS - Snowmobile Emissions

The information in the Snowmobile Grant Program EIS is the only accurate information to date on snowmobile emissions. Following is an explanation and status of efforts.

Much information has appeared in newspapers over the past 2 years about comparisons of emissions from automobiles and snowmobiles. This information is based on inaccurate test cycles for snowmobiles. The State of California was the original source of the above mentioned comparative information (1991). After they originally released the information, they withdrew their comments on snowmobiles. The reason: no test cycle for studying snowmobile emissions has been developed so they used other methods designed for other engines which gave erroneous results. In fact, the testing that has been done in Yellowstone National Park and publicized so widely is also erroneous because of the lack of a test cycle for snowmobiles.

The snowmobile industry, in communication with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has contracted with a technical university in Texas to develop a test cycle for snowmobiles. The University is the same contractor that has developed test cycles for other types of engines for EPA. I have been advised that this snowmobile test cycle will be ready this fall and accurate testing will begin in February, 1996.

The EPA has not yet adopted "standards" for snowmobile emissions. However, the Michigan office of EPA has advised that they have scheduled development of such standards as follows:

1996	Initiate development
1997	Publish draft standards for public review
1998	Adopt standards

This indicates that snowmobile emission standards will not be in place until either the 1999 or 2000 model year for snowmobiles.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
AIR QUALITY DIVISION

MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

836 FRONT STREET

(406) 444-3454
(406) 444-3671
FAX (406) 444-5275

PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

July 24, 1995

Susan Hawkin
Ten Lake Snowmobile Club
P.O. Box 404
Eureka, MT 59917

Subject: Snowmobile Emission Estimates

As per our July 18th phone conversation, I am enclosing some information for estimating snowmobile emissions. I understand that this data will be used by your club to receive trail funding from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Attached is Table II-8-1 from the Environmental Protection Agency's source book on air pollution emission factors, or AP-42. This table outlines the approximate emissions for various pollutants by various use rates. Your task is to estimate how many gallons or how much time (hours of actual operation) that your club uses the trail. For example:

> One sled operates on the trail approximately 4 hours per weekend, for a three month season. If winter is defined as December through February, then 13 weekends would be used. Repeat this calculation for each member of the club for each desired pollutant.
>
> 4 hours x 13 weekends = 52 hours/season (hr/s)
> Carbon Monoxide = 978 grams/hour (g/hr)
> ---
> 52 hr/s x 978 g/hr = 50,856 g/s – 453.58 (g/lb) =
>
> **112.12 lbs of CO per season**
> = = = = = = = = = = = = = = =

Should you have any questions concerning this table or calculations, please call me at (406) 444-7305.

Sincerely,

Robert Habeck

Robert Habeck
Air Quality Specialist

RH:jab
cc: Bob Walker, Coordinator
Montana FWP Trails Program

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WATER QUALITY DIVISION

COGSWELL BUILDING
1400 BROADWAY

MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-2406
FAX (406) 444-1374

PO BOX 200901
HELENA MONTANA 59620-0901

July 6, 1995

Susan Hawkins
PO Box 404
Eureka MT 59917

Re: Spill reporting policy - Revised June 1991

Dear Ms. Hawkins:

The reporting policy for hazardous materials, oil and petroleum product spills in Montana is as follows:

All spills, except as noted below, shall be reported immediately to the state's 24-hour phone number (406) 444-6911, or during business hours to (406) 444-2406.

The following types of spills are not required to be reported provided the spill does not enter or threaten to enter surface water, and it is immediately contained, removed and properly disposed:

1. Ten barrels (420 gallons) or less of crude oil, produced water, injection water, or combination thereof;

2. Twenty-five (25) gallons or less of refined crude oil products, including but not limited to, gasoline, diesel fuel, aviation fuel, asphalt, road oil, kerosene, fuel oil, and derivatives of mineral, animal, or vegetable oils.

This reporting policy represents revisions made on June 3, 1991. If you have any questions, give me a call at (406) 444-2406.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Pasichnyk
Water Quality Specialist
Water Quality Division

MP:spill.ltr

"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER"

History: En. Sec. 9, Ch. 434, L. 1971; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 124, L. 1973; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 91, L. 1974; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 161, L. 1977; amd. Sec. 13, Ch. 417, L. 1977; amd. Sec. 14, Ch. 421, L. 1977; R.C.M. 1947, 53-1020(1); amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 218, L. 1979.

23-2-634. Regulation of snowmobile noise. (1) Except as provided in this section, every snowmobile must be equipped at all times with noise-suppression devices, including an exhaust muffler in good working order and in constant operation. A snowmobile may not be modified by any person in any manner that will amplify or otherwise increase total noise emissions to a level greater than that emitted by the snowmobile as originally constructed, regardless of date of manufacture.

(2) Every person who owns or operates a snowmobile manufactured after June 30, 1972, but prior to June 30, 1975, shall maintain the machine in such a manner that it will not exceed a sound level limitation of 82 dbA measured at 50 feet.

(3) A snowmobile manufactured after June 30, 1975, except snowmobiles designated for competition purposes only, may not be sold or offered for sale unless that machine has been certified by the manufacturer as being able to conform to a sound level limitation of not more than 78 dbA measured at 50 feet. Every person who owns or operates a snowmobile manufactured after June 30, 1975, shall maintain the machine in such a manner that it will not exceed a sound level limitation of 78 dbA measured at 50 feet.

(4) A manufacturer who certifies that a new snowmobile can comply with the noise limitation requirements of 23-2-601 through 23-2-644 shall affix a permanent notice of that certification to every snowmobile offered for sale in the state of Montana.

(5) In certifying that a new snowmobile can comply with the noise limitation requirements of 23-2-601 through 23-2-644, a manufacturer shall make the certification based upon measurements made in accordance with SAE recommended practice J192, as amended. The department, in enforcing the provisions of this section, shall make measurements of snowmobile noise in accordance with applicable practices outlined in the "Procedure for Sound Level Measurements of Snowmobiles" (January, 1969), as amended, used by the international snowmobile industry association or with other standards for measurement of sound level as the department may adopt.

(6) This section does not apply to organized races or similar competitive events held on:

(a) private lands or waters, with the permission of the owner, lessee, or custodian of the land or waters; or

(b) public lands or waters, with the consent of the public agency having the authority to grant consent.

History: En. Sec. 9, Ch. 434, L. 1971; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 124, L. 1973; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 91, L. 1974; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 161, L. 1977; amd. Sec. 13, Ch. 417, L. 1977; amd. Sec. 14, Ch. 421, L. 1977; R.C.M. 1947, 53-1020(part); amd. Sec. 9, Ch. 363, L. 1979; amd. Sec. 7, Ch. 351, L. 1993.

Compiler's Comments

1993 Amendment: Chapter 351 in (6)(a), in two places, and in (6)(b), after reference to lands, inserted "or waters"; at end of (6)(b), after "consent", deleted "provided that total sound produced by such an event may not exceed 50 dbA at any point 50 feet or more outside the area under the control of the sponsoring entity"; and made minor changes in style. Amendment effective April 16, 1993.

APPENDIX C

Wildlife Biologist Reports

DRAFT

BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION

for

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL GROOMING

Rexford Ranger District
Kootenai National Forest

Prepared by:

_____ _____
Lewis Young, Wildlife Biologist Date

Approved by:

_____ _____
Doug Perkinson, Forest Fish Biologist Date

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BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL GROOMING

REXFORD RANGER DISTRICT
KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species

Implementation of the proposed federal action will have **NO EFFECT** on peregrine falcons, bald eagles, water howellia, and white sturgeon; and **IS NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** grizzly bears or gray wolves.

Sensitive Species

Implementation of the proposed federal action will have **NO IMPACT** on sensitive plants, any animal listed as not suspected in Table 2, bull trout, torrent sculpin, Coeur d'Alene salamanders, harlequin ducks, flammulated owls, black-backed woodpeckers, and Townsend's big-eared bats; and **MAY IMPACT INDIVIDUALS BUT IS NOT LIKELY TO CAUSE A TREND TO FEDERAL LISTING OR LOSS OF VIABILITY** for boreal owls, fishers, and lynx.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

In accordance with Endangered Species Act Section 7 and FSM 2671.4, Kootenai National Forest is required to request written concurrence with respect to the determination of potential effects on grizzly bears and gray wolves.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR SENSITIVE SPECIES

The findings of this biological evaluation are that the proposed action would not result in a trend toward federal listing as a threatened or endangered species for any sensitive species. No mitigation measures for adverse affects are required.

NEED FOR RE-ASSESSMENT BASED ON CHANGED CONDITIONS

The findings of this biological evaluation are based on the best data and scientific information available at the time of preparation. If new information reveals effects that may impact threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species or their habitats in a manner or to an extent not considered in this assessment; if the proposed action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect that was not considered in this assessment; or if a new species is listed or habitat identified that may be affected by the action, a revised biological evaluation should be prepared.

INTRODUCTION

This biological evaluation addresses the potential effects of the proposed federal action on all threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species known or suspected to occur within the area of influence of the proposed action. General life history information on these species is provided in Reel et al. (1989) and is incorporated by reference into this biological evaluation.

Threatened, endangered, and proposed species are managed under the authority of the federal Endangered Species Act (PL 93-205, as amended) and the National Forest Management Act (PL 94-588). The Endangered Species Act requires federal agencies to ensure that all actions which they "authorize, fund, or carry out" are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened, endangered, or proposed species. Agencies are further required to develop and carry out conservation programs for these species. Conservation measures implemented to date for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species by Kootenai National Forest are listed in Appendix II (on file at the Supervisor's Office).

Sensitive species are managed under the authority of the National Forest Management Act (PL 94-588). They are administratively designated by the Regional Forester (FSM 2670.5, Mumma, 1991) and are those species for which population viability is a concern.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed federal action involves National Forest lands in the Big Creek drainage on the Rexford Ranger District in Lincoln County, Montana. The project involves snow grooming about 75 miles on 7 roads which are located approximately 25 miles southwest of Eureka, Montana. About 56 miles of the grooming would be within the grizzly bear recovery area. Figure 1 shows the proposed grooming routes.

The proposed federal action consists of allowing the Libby Sno-cats snowmobile club to groom about 75 miles of snowmobile trails on the Rexford Ranger District annually between December 1 and April 30 with exceptions for two roads. The majority of roads 753 and 336 (see figure 1) could not be groomed during April to avoid spring grizzly bear habitat.

No grizzly bear dens are currently known within the project area, but if any are discovered in the future the grooming program would be adjusted to protect denning sites.

All grooming would take place on existing roads which are currently open to snowmobile use during the December 1 to April 30 period. The club would periodically groom the roads depending on the snow conditions, the amount of traffic on each trail, and the availability of the groomer. The grooming is paid for with money available through the Montana tax on snowmobiles and refunds from the gasoline road tax.

Grooming would generally occur two or three times during the December 1 to April 30 period, but could happen more often if snow conditions require it and funding was available.

A summary of the proposed action is presented below:

Total acres treated	0
Treatment Methods (acres)	
clearcut w/reserves	0
seedtree w/reserves	0
shelterwood	0
group selection	0
site preparation	0
tree planting	0
precommercial thinning	0
Harvest Volume (MMBF)	0
Road Construction (miles)	0
Road Reconstruction (miles)	0
Road Rehabilitation (miles)	0
Road Closures (miles)	0
Roads Groomed (miles)	75

LEGEND

proposed snowmobile trail grooming routes
grooming not allowed during April on these routes

Figure 1. Proposed Snowmobile Trail Grooming.

SPECIES LIST

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided a species list of threatened, endangered, and proposed species known or suspected to occur on the Kootenai National Forest on March 6, 1991 (McMaster, 1991). Further refinements of the list were provided by Harms, 1992; Harms, 1993; and Lobdell, 1993. This list is shown in Table 1.

Sensitive species designated on the Kootenai National Forest and their status within the area of influence of the proposed action are listed in Table 2.

Table 1. Threatened, endangered, and proposed species known or suspected to occur within the influence area of the proposed action (Harms 1992, Harms 1993, Lobdell 1993, McMaster 1991).

Listing Status	Name	Project Area Status *
Threatened:	Grizzly bear (Ursus arctos horribilis)	K
Endangered:	Bald eagle (Haliaetus leucocephalus)	K
	Peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus)	S
	Gray wolf (Canis lupus)	K
Proposed:	Water howellia (Howellia aquatilis)	S
	White sturgeon (Acipenser transmontanus)	S

*Status Key: K = known, S = suspected in area of influence of proposed action.

Table 2. **Sensitive species listed on Kootenai National Forest (Mumma, 1991) and status within the influence area of the proposed action.**

	Name	Project Area Status *
Plants:	Fringed onion (Allium fibrillum)	S
	Maidenhair spleenwort (Asplenium trichomanes)	S
	Bog birch (Betula pumila)	S
	Mingan Island moonwort (Botrichium minganense)	S
	Northern golden-carpet (Chrysosplenium tetrandrum)	S
	Common clarkia (Clarkia rhomboidea)	S
	Small yellow lady's-slipper (Cypripedium calceolus var. parviflorum	S
	Clustered lady's slipper (Cypripedium fasciculatum)	S
	Sparrow's-egg lady's-slipper (Cypripedium passerinum)	S
	Crested shield-fern (Dryopteris cristata)	S
	Giant helleborine (Epipactis gigantea)	S
	Green-keeled cottongrass (Eriophorum viridicarinatum)	S
	Western boneset (Eupatorium occidentale)	S
	Howell's gumweed (Grindelia howellii)	S
	Water howellia (Howellia aquatilis)	S
	Geyer's biscuit-root (Lomatium geyeri)	S
	Bog clubmoss (Lycopodium inundatum)	S
	Round-leaved orchis (Orchis rotundifolia)	S
	Wool grass (Scirpus cyperinus)	S
	Water bulrush (Scirpus subterminalis)	S
	Northern beechfern (Thelypteris phegopteris)	S
	Kidney-leaved violet (Viola renifolia)	S
Fish:	Shorthead sculpin (Cottus confusus)	NS1
	Torrent sculpin (Cottus rhotheus)	S
	Westslope cutthroat trout (Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi)	NS2
	Redband trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss ssp.)	NS3
	Bull trout (Salvelinus confluentus)	S
	White sturgeon (Acipenser transmontanus)	S
Wildlife:	Coeur d'Alene salamander (Plethodon idahoensis)	S
	Common loon (Gavia immer)	NS4
	Harlequin duck (Histrionicus histrionicus)	K
	Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (Pedioecetes phasianellus)	NS5
	Boreal owl (Aegolius funereus)	S
	Flammulated owl (Otus flammeolus)	S
	Black-backed woodpecker (Picoides arcticus)	K
	Townsend's big-eared bat (Plecotus townsendii)	S
	Fisher (Martes pennanti)	S
	Lynx (Felis lynx)	S
	Woodland caribou (Montana only) (Rangifer tarandus caribou	NS6
	Northern bog lemming (Synaptomys borealis)	NS7

*Status Key: K = known, S = suspected in area of influence of proposed action
NS = not suspected in area of influence of proposed action

*Status Key Continued:

1 = Two years of sculpin surveys have failed to locate any populations of Shorthead sculpins on the Kootenai National Forest, including the streams in the analysis area. This proposed action, and connected and foreseeable activities, will not cumulatively affect shorthead sculpins downstream from the project area due to the lack of a physical or biological connection between proposed activities and known or suspected populations elsewhere.

2 = Although cutthroat trout are present in Big Creek, fisheries surveys indicate the cutthroat population has hybrid fish with less than 98% purity. Montana and the Kootenai National Forest do not classify this population as sensitive for conservation purposes. In addition, a review of the fish distribution and historic stocking records of Montana indicated that non-native species occupy this area and downstream waters. Montana and the Forest Service assume the fish species in Big Creek are a hybrid population. This proposed action, and connected and forseeable activities, will not cumulatively affect pure-strain westslope cutthroat trout due to the lack of a physical or biological connection between proposed activities and known or suspected populations elsewhere.

3 = Interior redband trout populations of 98% or better purity only inhabit tributaries to the Kootenai River below Kootenai Falls, which is the species' historic range. This proposed action, and connected and forseeable activities, will not cumulatively affect Interior redbands due to the lack of a physical or biological connection between proposed activities and known or suspected populations.

4 = Big Creek and its tributaries are too small to provide habitat for common loons. Loons are commonly found on Koocanusa Reservoir, but no reports of loons on Big Creek have been recorded.

5 = No suitable habitat exists in the Big Creek drainage. Columbian sharp-tailed grouse require extensive areas of perennial grassland and deciduous shrub habitats.

6 = Potential habitat exists within the project area, but no populations or individual animals are known or suspected to occur. The nearest known populations are in the Selkirk Mountains in northern Idaho and southern British Columbia.

7 = Surveys on the Kootenai National Forest in 1992 only found northern bog lemmings in association with sphagnum bogs with bog birch also present. No sphagnum bogs are present on the road surfaces proposed for grooming.

GRIZZLY BEAR

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Grizzly bear habitat is generally dictated by food availability and distribution, as well as isolation from humans. Large areas of undisturbed habitat are required. Grizzlies occupy low-elevation riparian areas, snowchutes and meadows in the spring and late fall, and move up to high-elevation sub-alpine forests in the summer, early fall and winter. Excavated dens, usually at high elevations, are entered during fall and occupied for 4-5 months. A majority of the diet is composed of vegetation (forbs, sedges, grasses, roots, berries, pine nuts), but also includes fish, small rodents, ungulates, carrion and insects.

Population declines are generally due to loss of habitat and direct and indirect human-caused mortality. On July 28, 1975, the grizzly bear was listed as threatened throughout its range in the lower 48 states. In 1982, the USFWS released the first draft of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan, which was updated in 1990 and 1992 (USFWS, 1992). Seven grizzly bear ecosystems were identified, two of which affect the Kootenai National Forest: the Northern Continental Divide and the Cabinet/Yaak ecosystems. The Cabinet/Yaak ecosystem, which influences portions of the proposed sale areas, contains approximately 2,600 square miles of recovery zone. For purposes of easier management and analyzing cumulative effects, the ecosystem was divided into Bear Management Units (BMUs), two of which are partially located on the Rexford Ranger District (#16 and #17). These BMUs are managed according the grizzly bear standards and guidelines contained in the Forest Plan under Management Area 14 and Appendix 8 (KFP, Vol.I, III-58+; Vol.II, A8-18).

The majority of the proposed grooming on the Rexford Ranger District is in BMU #17 (56 miles) with part of the grooming proposed outside the grizzly recovery area (18 miles). See figure 2. Each BMU is further divided into Bear Analysis Areas which lie totally, or nearly so, within the grizzly bear recovery line. The proposed activity lies partially within BMU #17 in Bear Analysis Areas 1-17-1, 1-71-2, 1-17-5, 1-17-6, and 1-17-7.

The proposed snowmobile trail grooming would occur on existing roads which are within suitable grizzly habitat. About 56 miles are on roads normally open yearlong to motorized vehicles (roads 336, 255, 7183, and 4731), and about 18 miles are on roads normally closed to motorized vehicles except over-the-snow vehicles from December 1 through April 30 (roads 665, 753, and 250).

Grizzly bears may be found at very low densities throughout the analysis area both inside and outside the recovery area. Two radio-collared grizzlies have ranged through the drainages on the west side of Koocanusa Reservoir over the past few years. Suitable habitat occurs both inside and outside the recovery area within the analysis area.

Major activities have occured in the past and are planned for the future in BMU #17. Table 3 shows past and projected major activities in BMU #17:

LEGEND

proposed snowmobile trail grooming routes

bear analysis areas within BMU #17

Figure 2. Bear management unit #17 in relation to proposed snowmobile trail grooming.

Table 3. Temporal/Spatial Distribution of Major Activities within BMU #17.

BAA	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
1-17-1	AB	A	L	Q	Q	QUV		
1-17-2	A	A						
4-17-3								
4-17-4	C	H	HMNO	MNOR		W	W	W
1-17-5	D						a	a
1-17-6	EFG	EFGHIJK	FGHIJKO	GO		X	b	b
1-17-7	EFG	EFGI	EFGIP		ST	YZ	Z	
1-17-8								cd

A-North Fork TS
B-two stand conversions
C-Pink Mountain TS
D-one LP conversion
E-East Branch TS
F-South Hill TS
G-Lower Larry TS
H-Dark Creek TS
I-Cub TS
J-Boar TS
K-Bruin TS
L-salvage sales
M-Zulu Smoot Post & Pole
N-Zulu Smoot MP16 Post & Pole
O-Purcell TS
P-Larry Salvage TS (W)
Q-Good Creek TS
R-Weasel Creek TS
S-East Branch Salvage (W)
T-roadside salvage
U-Loop TS
V-(west portion of Good Creek TS)
W-Zulu Smoot TS
X-South Fork Hill Blowdown Salvage
Y-Larry's Blowdown Salvage
Z-Lost Soul Salvage TS (part winter)
a-Robert Copeland TS
b-Bald Bear TS
c-North West Branch TS
d-South West Branch TS

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

The goal for grizzly bear management on the Kootenai National Forest is to provide sufficient quantity and quality of habitat to facilitate grizzly bear recovery. An integral part of the goal is to implement measures within the authority of the Forest Service to minimize human-caused grizzly bear mortalities.

This goal is accomplished by achieving five objectives relative to grizzly bear recovery (Harms 1990). A number of measures are used to gauge whether the objectives are being met. These measures include non-discretionary Forest Plan standards and guidelines and other discretionary measures. The following analysis describes the potential effects, including cumulative effects of the proposed action by examining how these measures are implemented and, thus, how the objectives relating to grizzly bear recovery are met.

Objective 1. Provide adequate space to meet the spatial requirements of a recovered grizzly bear population.

Spatial requirements are achieved by implementing three Forest Plan standards: 1) habitat effectiveness, 2) open road density (ORD), and 3) displacement areas.

Habitat Effectiveness

The first standard is the application of the cumulative analysis process developed on the Kootenai National Forest (Christensen and Madel, 1982), which established a 70% habitat effectiveness threshold as a minimum level needed to provide spatial requirements for grizzly bear recovery. Habitat effectiveness, or available space, is a measure of the amount of space unaffected by man's influence and a bear's ability to occupy that habitat.

Habitat effectiveness only applies to the period when bears are outside the den, and would not be affected by the proposed winter grooming.

Table 4 shows the habitat effectiveness for BMU #17 resulting from other spring, summer, and fall activities. Table 4 is provided to help describe the yearlong habitat conditions.

Table 4. Grizzly Bear Habitat Effectiveness in BMU #17.

BMU #17	1993	1994	1995
	68%	72%	73%

BMU #17 is currently below the 70% threshold, and does not meet the recovery standard for habitat effectiveness. A schedule of road restrictions and management activities has been prepared to achieve at least 70% by 1995. Road restrictions are the most effective management tools to compensate for the loss of habitat effectiveness due to the opening of closed roads, the creation of new ones, or implementation of major activities. The schedule of activities and road restrictions will be used to increase the available space over time. The USFWS has reviewed the scheduling for BMU #17 (Spinks, 1990) and has determined that although the current situation is not favorable, the scheduled plans for achieving 70% by 1995 would be acceptable in meeting the objectives for grizzly bear recovery.

Open Road Density

The second standard used to provide space is open road density.

This standard is not applicable to the proposed snowmobile grooming because all proposed activity would take place during the winter when bears are denned.

The existing and planned open road density for spring, summer, and fall for each analysis area is displayed in Table 5. These are provided for information on cumulative effects in BMU 17.

Table 5. Open Road Densities per Analysis Area for BMU #17.

BAA	1993	1994	1995
1-17-1	1.06	0.74	0.74
1-17-2	0.93	0.75*	0.75*
4-17-3	0.67	0.67	0.75*
4-17-4	0.75*	0.75*	0.75*
1-17-5	0.74	0.75*	0.75*
1-17-6	0.70	0.75*	0 69
1-17-7	0.60	0.00	0.34
1-17-8	0.00	0.00	0.61

*Although road closures have not yet been identified, these analysis areas are planned to be at or below 0.75 by 1995.

The current open road densities exceed 0.75 miles per square mile in two bear analysis areas, but the USFWS has previously reviewed the schedule for meeting the ORD standard and determined that the schedule is acceptable.

Displacement Areas

The third standard provides for displacement areas of 5,000 to 15,000 acres adjacent to each major activity. Generally, the analysis area containing the activity is considered active for the year, and the analysis area used for displacement would provide undisturbed habitat for those bears displaced by the activity. The displacement area must meet all the bear standards such as habitat effectiveness, ORDs and the absence of major activities.

This standard does not apply during the winter when the snowmobile trail grooming is proposed.

Table 6 is provided for cumulative effects information in BMU 17 during the spring, summer, and fall when this standard applies. Table 6 shows the active analysis areas and the displacement areas that would be free from activities, providing the spatial needs of bears over time.

Table 6. Schedule of BMU #17 Active/ Displacement Analysis Areas.

Year	Analysis Areas Active	Displacement Area
1993	1-17-1 4-16-10* 4-17-4 1-17-6 1-17-7	1-17-2 4-17-3 4-11-4* 1-17-6** 1-17-8
1994	1-17-5 4-16-10* 4-17-4 1-17-6	1-17-2 4-17-3 4-11-5* 1-17-8
1995	1-17-5 4-17-4 1-17-8	1-17-2 4-11-5* 1-17-7

*Analysis area outside BMU #17.
**Special one-time exception based on consultation for Blowdown Salvage Sales.

Objective 2. Manage for an adequate distribution of bears across the ecosystem.

Grizzly bear habitat on the Kootenai National Forest is managed according to the Bear Management Unit (BMU) concept (Christensen and Madel, 1982) for purposes of managing cumulative effects of human activities. This management concept potentially provides for an adequate distribution of bears by delineating BMUs with specific land management guidance to insure compatablity with grizzly bears. BMUs further broken down into analysis areas are evaluated and measures applied to insure adequate distribution of bears. Six standards are used to determine if the distribution objective is being met.

1. Opening size -- Proposed harvest units, either individually or in combination with existing unrecovered units or natural openings, should be designed to be <40 acres (big game summer range) or <20 acres (big game winter range).

This standard is not applicable to the proposed snowmobile trail grooming. Vegetation would not be changed from the existing condition. No openings would be created or modified.

2. Movement corridors -- Unharvested corridors >600 feet in width should be maintained between proposed harvest units and between proposed and unrecovered existing harvest units or natural openings.

This standard is not applicable to the proposed snowmobile trail grooming. No existing corridors would be modified.

3. Cover requirements -- Maintain at least 40 percent hiding or thermal cover on big game summer ranges and 70 percent thermal cover on big game winter ranges.

This standard is not applicable to the proposed snowmobile trail grooming. Existing hiding and thermal cover conditions would not be modified.

4. Seasonal components -- Schedule proposed timber harvest activities to avoid known spring habitats during the spring-use period (April 1 to June 15) and known denning habitats during the winter (October 15 to April 15.)

Roads 753 (between 255 junction and the end) and 336 (between 7183 and 255 junctions) would not have grooming allowed during April. These roads total about 16 miles. Grooming would be allowed on about 2 miles of spring range where roads 255, 4731, 336, and 7183 cross or come near the South Fork Big Creek. All of these are roads that are normally open yearlong to motorized traffic anyway and are the tie-throughs between higher elevations.

The proposed activity would occur during the denning period. In the Cabinet-Yaak area, grizzly bears dens have been documented above 4500 feet elevation. Figure 3 shows the amount of proposed grooming that is within the elevation range for potential denning habitat. About 25 miles would be within potential denning habitat although some of this is outside BMU 17.

No grizzly bear dens are known along or near any of the roads proposed for grooming (Wayne Kasworm, personnal communication). About 56 miles of the proposed grooming is on yearlong open roads, and about 18 miles on roads normally closed to motorized traffic yearlong except for over-the-snow vehicles from December 1 through April 30. See Figure 4. Traffic during the fall and early winter along the roads open yearlong is expected to reduce the chances of grizzly bear denning near these roads.

If any grizzly bear dens are discovered within the project area in the future, a new analysis will be required to assess the new information.

5. Open-road densities -- Refer to discussion under objective 1.

6. Displacement areas -- Refer to discussion under objective 1.

Objective 3. Manage for an acceptable level of mortality risk.

Most human-caused grizzly bear mortalities on the Kootenai National Forest have resulted from interactions between bears and big game hunters (Kasworm and Manley, 1988). Grizzly bear vulnerability to human-caused mortality is partially a function of habitat security. Therefore, mortality can be partially managed by the application of standards which are designed to maintain or enhance habitat security. These standards have previously been discussed for objectives 1 and 2: 70 percent habitat effectiveness threshold, opening size, movement corridors, cover requirements, seasonal components, and open-road density. These standards only apply to spring, summer, and fall with the exception of denning seasonal components.

The proposed snowmobile trail grooming could potentially affect the risk of mortality by disturbing bears in their den and causing them to expend more energy. Abandonment of the den has been reported in some cases.

Besides the trail grooming itself, it is expected that the grooming will encourage more snowmobiling both on the trail and off-trail where the groomed trail provides easier access to play areas such as recent timber harvest units and natural openings.

As discussed under seasonal components, the probability of den selection happening along yearlong open roads is reduced due to the normal traffic. If a bear were to select a den near one of the closed roads proposed for grooming, it could be disturbed.

No grizzly bear dens have been reported along or near any of the proposed grooming routes or potential play areas (W. Kasworm, personal communication). Road 753 is at low elevation and is less likely to have grizzly denning near it than does road 250.

Since no dens are known along or near any of the proposed grooming routes, the risk of mortality due to disturbance from the proposed activity is considered acceptable. This is consistent with the acceptability of winter logging within potential denning habitat when no den sites are known (Brooks, 1992).

Objective 4. Maintain/improve habitat suitability with respect to bear food production.

The proposed snowmobile trail grooming would have no effect on bear food or production. Grooming would occur on snow covered road surfaces.

Objective 5. Meet the management direction outlined in the Interagency Grizzly Bear Guidelines (51 Federal Register 42863) for management situations 1, 2, and 3.

The previously described Forest Plan standards and guidelines have been determined to meet the intent of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Guidelines (Buterbaugh, 1991).

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects of this and other federal actions on grizzly bears and their habitat are analyzed as a combination of all five of the previously described objectives to facilitate grizzly bear recovery. Many of the factors analyzed for the five objectives such as space, open road density, and displacement areas contribute to the cumulative effects analysis. It is assumed that meeting all five of the recovery objectives would result in an acceptable level of cumulative effects.

Statement of Findings

The proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat. This determination is based on: 1) physical habitat characteristics such as opening sizes, corridors, cover, displacement areas,

open road densities would not be affected by the proposed activity, and 2) risk of mortality would increase but remain within acceptable limits.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the grizzly bear. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

LEGEND

proposed snowmobile trail grooming routes
proposed grooming within potential denning habitat

Figure 3. Proposed snowmobile trail grooming within potential grizzly bear denning habitat.

LEGEND

roads open yearlong to motorized vehicles
roads closed yearlong except to snowmobiles in the winter

Figure 4. Proposed snowmobile trail grooming in relation to road management restrictions.

Bald eagle

Description of Population and Habitat Status

The bald eagle frequents open water where fish and waterfowl are available for food. They will also use upland areas without water if other food sources are available, such as rabbits or big game carrion. Generally, nesting sites are located within 1-2 miles of water in the tallest trees available, where they have easy flight access and view of the water.

Eagles commonly use Koocanusa Reservoir during the entire year, including a sizable wintering population (McClelland, 1989) especially near the dam. Individuals can be seen over much of the District during transitory flights and along roads during the winter when road kill is available as food.

Approximately 1 mile of of the proposed grooming on the Steep Creek road (#255) is within the area most likely to receive bald eagle use (Harms 1992).

All bald eagle nests are more than two miles from any of the proposed grooming activity.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

Management activities associated with this proposed action will not remove or reduce the effectiveness of any suitable habitat, known nest site or key habitat feature.

With the exception of about 1 mile of road #255, the proposed activities are outside the area of expected bald eagle use on the Rexford Ranger District (Harms 1992). The area of road #255 that is within 1 mile of Koocanusa Reservoir is a densly forested, north aspect that does not provide good prey potential, especially during the winter.

The nearest known bald eagle nest is more than 2 miles from road #255 and screened by topography. For those reasons, the late winter and early spring activities around the nest would not be influenced by the proposed activities.

Proposed grooming and associated snowmobiling activities would not change the availability of big game carrion or affect any migration flights.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action will have no effect on the bald eagle or its habitat. This determination is based on all the proposed activities being greater than 2 miles from any known active nest and lack of effect on migrating birds or carrion availability.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the bald eagle. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Peregrine falcon

Description of Population and Habitat Status

The peregrine falcon feeds and winters in open habitats where their prey concentrates, such as marshes and river bottoms. Prey consists almost exclusively of birds. In general, they nest on high cliff ledges, rock outcrops or talus slopes which dominate the surrounding area and overlook a body of water. Loss of habitat, human disturbance and DDT contamination have historically caused population declines.

Peregrine use within the project area and the entire ranger district is believed to be limited to migrating individuals. A few sightings of individual birds have been documented at the Rexford Ranger District, but the low numbers are likely due to the few qualified observers, lack of systematic surveys during migration periods, and low number of migrants. Potential nesting habitat for the falcon on the District is mainly limited

Drop 6031
Add 6065
In green

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☐ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☒ ~~New~~ Moved trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Lincoln Co Snow Kats
Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☐ NO ☒

If yes:

Species _____

1. Winter range _____ (list)

2. Travel corridor _____ (area)

3. Other _____

Suggested alternate route _____

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

☒ Approved ~~with above mentioned mitigation measures~~

☐ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown — Regional Wildlife Biologist — Date 6/27/96

Regional Parks Manager — Date

3/91

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☐ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☒ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Big Creek Rd. # 336

Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☒ NO ☐

If yes:

Species Moose, Mule Deer

1. Winter range for Moose & Mule Deer (list)

2. Travel corridor (area)

3. Other

Suggested alternate route

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

This rd has not been groomed in the past and should not be.

This route has been groomed in the past therefore is approved as amended. HEW

☐ Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures

☒ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown 3/8/95

Regional Wildlife Biologist Date Regional Parks Manager

Date HEW

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☐ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☒ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Rd. # 255 off Garden Ridge up E Branch Big C.

Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☒ NO ☐

If yes:

Species Lynx - This area is a Lynx core area, as is The E. Side of Big Creek Baldy.

1. Winter range Lynx (list)

2. Travel corridor (area)

3. Other

Suggested alternate route

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

This road has not been groomed in the past and should not be.

This route has been ~~app~~ groomed in the past, therefore it is approved. HEW

☐ Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures

☒ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown 3/1/95

Regional Wildlife Biologist Date HEW

Date

Regional Parks Manager

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☐ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☒ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Rd. # 255 off Garden Ridge up E Branch Big C.

Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☒ NO ☐

If yes:

Species Lynx - This area is a Lynx core area, as is The E. Side of Big Creek Baldy.

1. Winter range Lynx (list)

2. Travel corridor (area)

3. Other

Suggested alternate route

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

This road has not been groomed in the past and should not be.

This route has been ~~app~~ groomed in the past, therefore it is approved. HEW

☐ Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures

☒ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown 3/1/95

Regional Wildlife Biologist Date HEW

Date

Regional Parks Manager

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☒ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☐ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Dark-Purcell / E. F. Pipe Cr. / Big Cr. Baldy -
Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☒ NO ☐

If yes:

Species Lynx

1. Winter range Lynx (list)

2. Travel corridor _____ (area)

3. Other _____

Suggested alternate route This route is groomed accessionally - but is located in a lynx core area

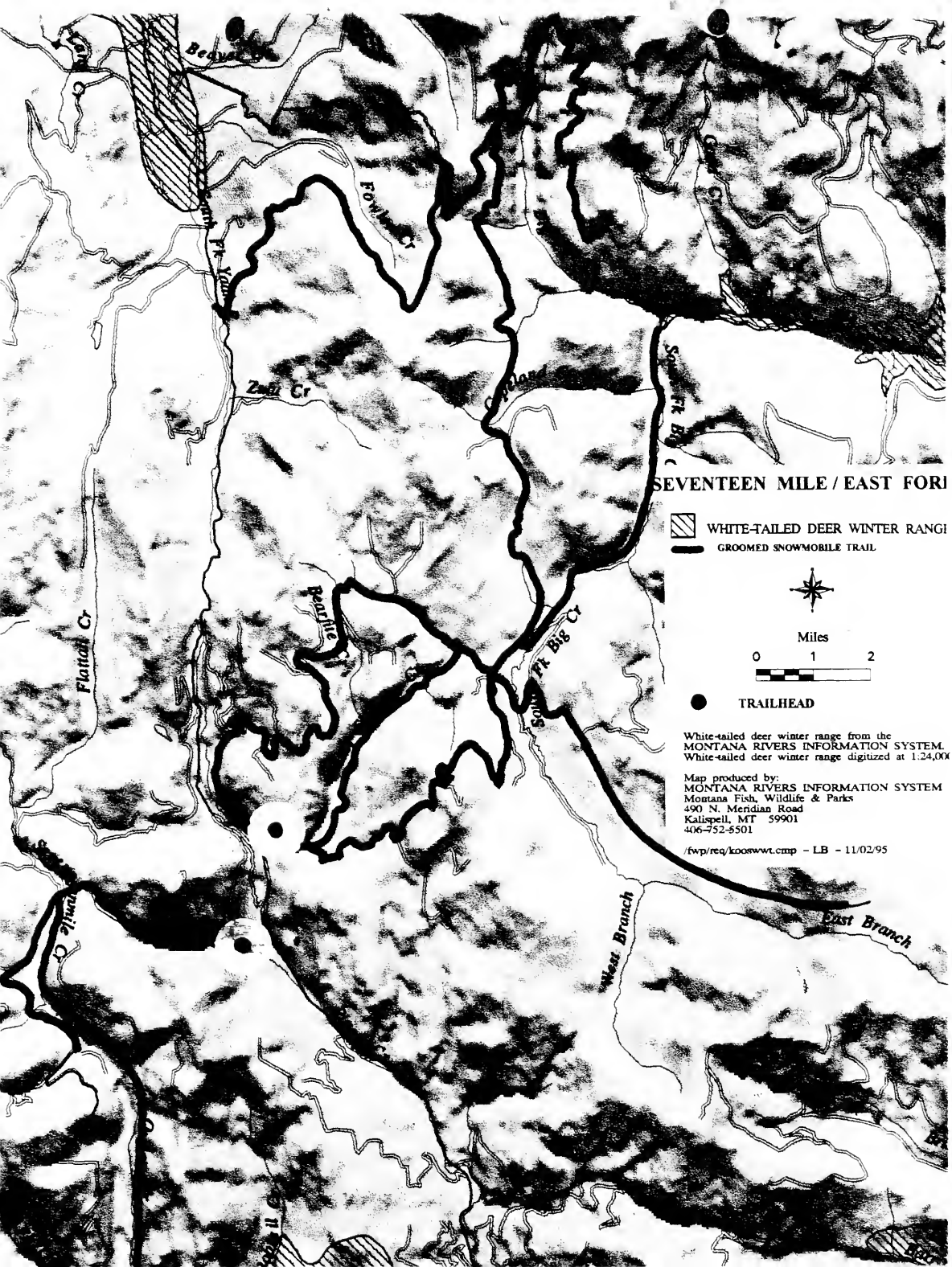
Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

☑ Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures

☐ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown 3/1/95
Regional Wildlife Biologist Date

Regional Parks Manager
Date


SEVENTEEN MILE / EAST FORI
WHITE-TAILED DEER WINTER RANGI
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
Miles
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TRAILHEAD
White-tailed deer winter range from the
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM.
White-tailed deer winter range digitized at 1:24,00
Map produced by:
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
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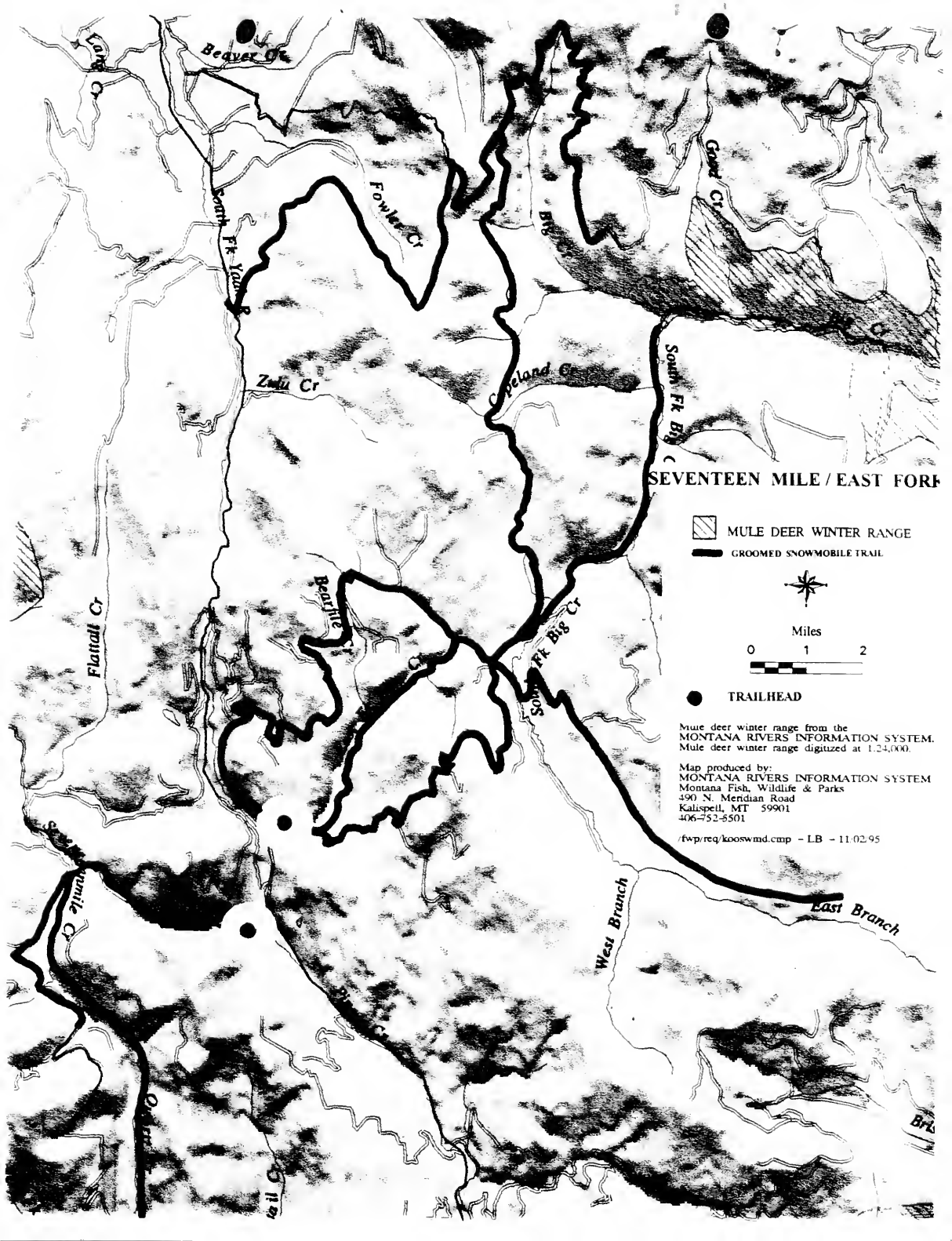
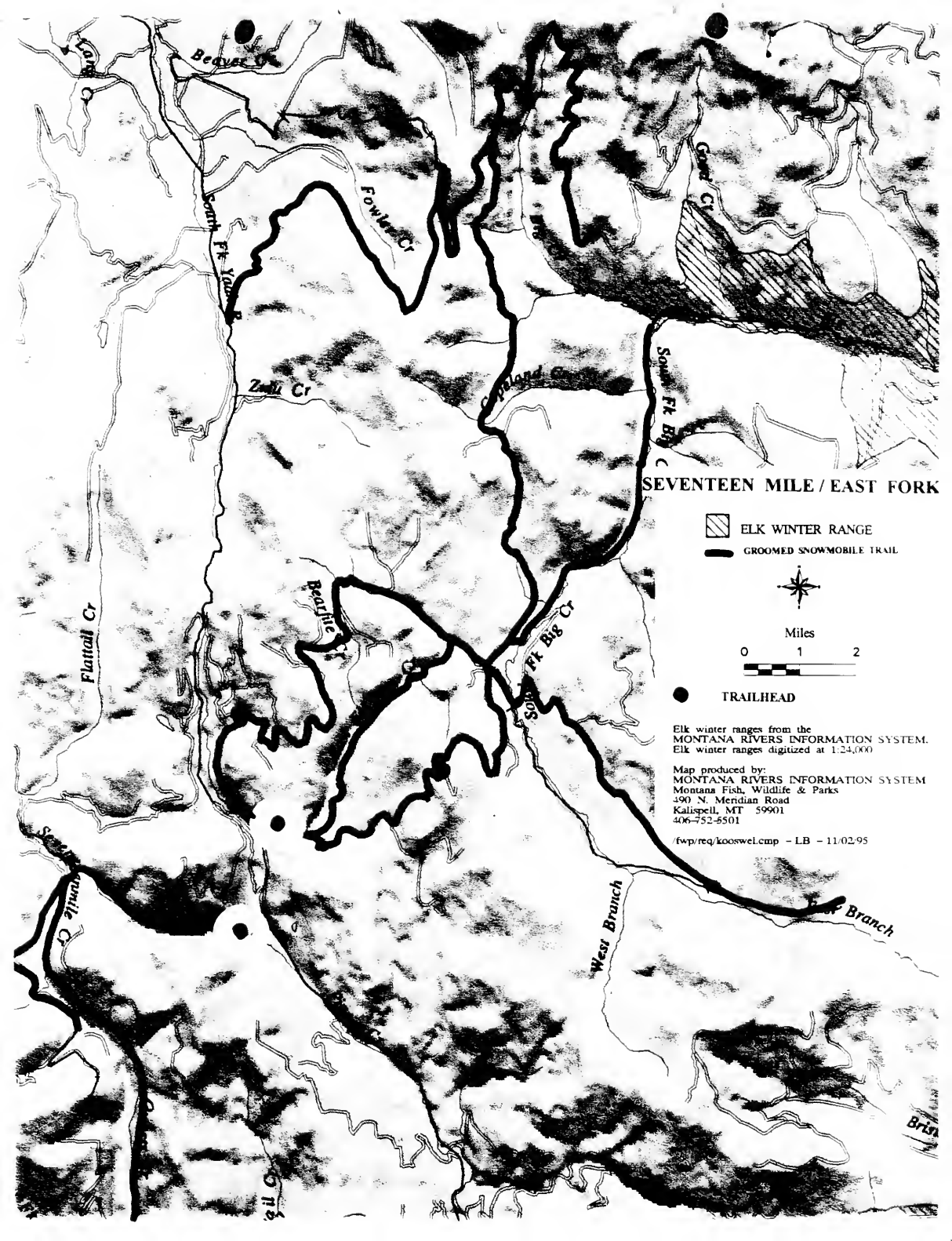
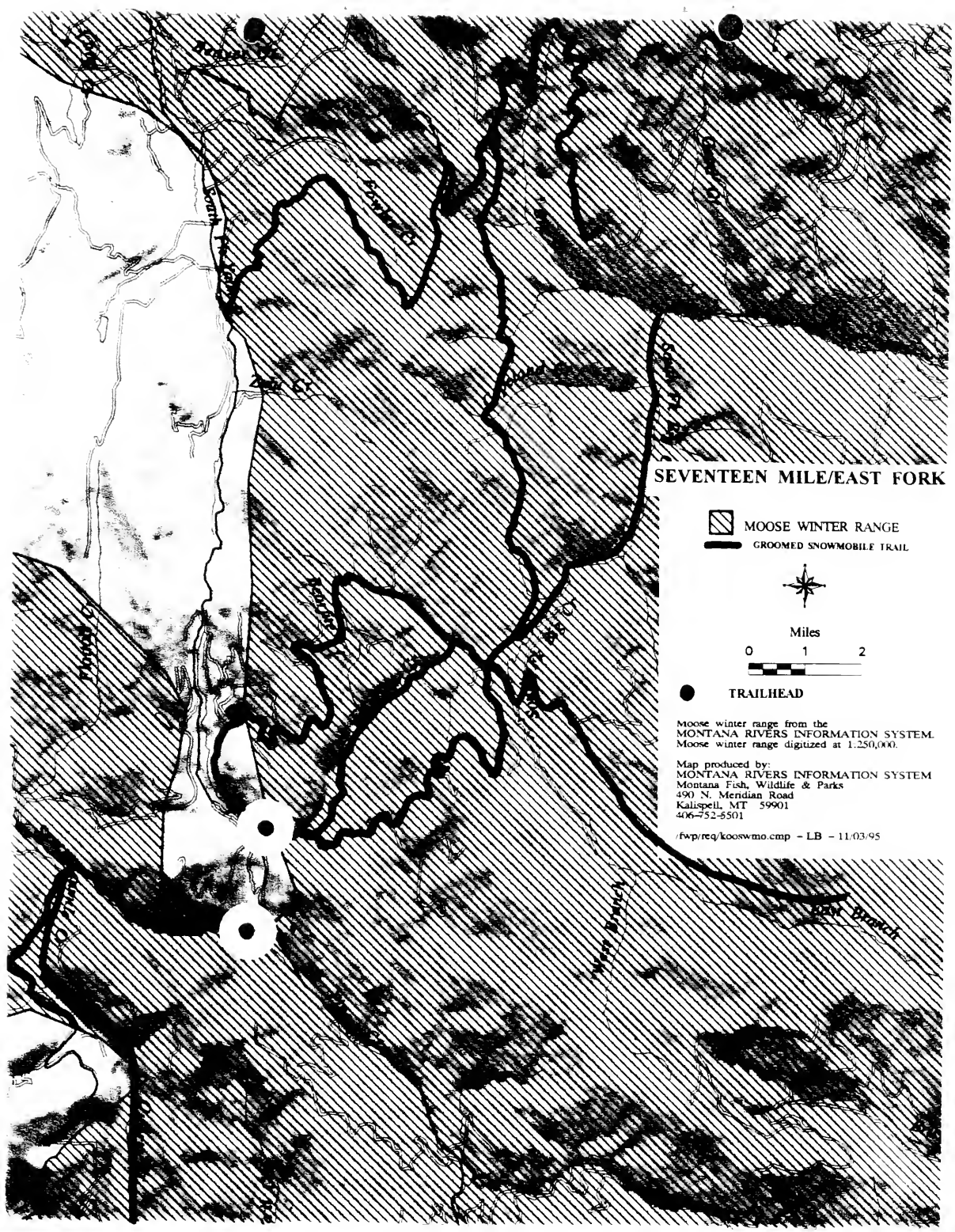
Beaver
Fowler Cr
Zuni Cr
Flattail Cr
Bearfite
Fk Big Cr
West Branch
East Branch


SEVENTEEN MILE / EAST FORK
MULE DEER WINTER RANGE
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
Miles
0 1 2
TRAILHEAD
Mule deer winter range from the
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM.
Mule deer winter range digitized at 1:24,000.
Map produced by:
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501
/fwp/req/kooswmd.cmp - LB - 11/02/95
Beaver Cr
Fowler Cr
South Fk Yaak R
Zulu Cr
Copeland Cr
Good Cr
South Fk Big Cr
Bearfile Cr
Flattail Cr
West Branch
East Branch


SEVENTEEN MILE / EAST FORK
ELK WINTER RANGE
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
Miles
0 1 2
TRAILHEAD
Elk winter ranges from the
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM.
Elk winter ranges digitized at 1:24,000
Map produced by:
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501
/fwp/req/kooswel.cmp - LB - 11/02/95
Beaver Cr
Fowler Cr
South Fk Yaak R
Zulu Cr
Copeland Cr
South Fk Big Cr
Bearfite Cr
Flattail Cr
West Branch
East Branch


SEVENTEEN MILE/EAST FORK
MOOSE WINTER RANGE
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
Miles
0 1 2
TRAILHEAD
Moose winter range from the
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM.
Moose winter range digitized at 1:250,000.
Map produced by:
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501
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APPENDIX D

Winter Recreation Observation Statistics

DRAFT

WINTER RECREATION OBSERVATION 1995-1996
Troy Area

DATE	AREA	SNOWMOBILES IN PARTY	SNOWMOBILES OBSERVED	OTHER REC.
	KEELER CREEK			
01-21-96		3		
01-28-96		20	5	
03-10-96		18	10	
03-17-96		3	4	
03-31-96		25	10	
03-31-96		12	20	
03-31-96		12	25	
04-04-96		9		
	PULPIT MT AND CHINA BASIN			
03-09-96		6		
	SPREAD, BUCKHORN & HELLROARING			
03-23-96		11	17	
03-24-96		3	10	
03-30-96		12	15	
03-30-96		14	20	
03-31-96		7	12	
04-06-96		5	35	
	SPAR AND SPRUCE			
03-16-96		15	30	
03-18-96		15	4	
03-24-96		13	30	
03-31-96		15	6	
04-05-96		5		
	IDA-MONT			
03-09-96		6		
	CALLAHAN			
03-30-96		4		

WINTER RECREATION OBSERVATION 1995-1996
Libby Area

DATE	AREA	SNOWMOBILES IN PARTY	SNOWMOBILES OBSERVED	OTHER REC.
	QUARTZ, BIG FOOT 17 MILE RD.			
01-01-96		3		
01-20-96		23	6	1
01-21-96		14	6	
02-04-96		10	10	
02-17-96		10	6	
02-24-96		7		
02-25-96		109 * 2nd Annual Poker Run		
03-17-96		3	8	
03-18-96		3	6	
	COPELAND, HORSE LAKE			
01-27-96		21		
02-11-96		7	3	
	PURCELL, EAST FORK BALDY MTN			
01-21-96		17		
03-03-96		20		
	HOWARD LAKE			
03-30-96		4		
	PETE CREEK			
03-15-96		9		
	BLUE MTN, NOISY CREEK			
01-04-96		4		
01-28-96		7	4	
02-06-96		3		
03-22-96		3		
03-31-96		12		

to the steep slopes along Koocanusa Reservoir and a few isolated cliff sites. No current nest site is known or suspected.

Koocanusa Reservoir and its associated waterfowl provide the best potential foraging habitat for peregrines, but riparian habitats along Big Creek, recent cutting units, and open subalpine areas provide other potential foraging habitat.

Peregrine use is unlikely in the project area during the proposed time frame of December 1 to April 30. Spring migration could begin in late March, but the low prey density in the mostly snow covered project area would be unattractive to any migrating birds.

Potential nesting habitat does occur along Big Creek near the proposed grooming on road #336. No current or historical nest sites are known or suspected however.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

Since no nest sites are known or suspected, the proposed activities would not affect peregrine falcon nesting sites. Physical nesting habitat features (cliffs) that provide potential nesting sites would not be altered. Prey species (waterfowl, shorebirds) available to migrating individuals would not be reduced. Prey species density is very low during the snow-covered period in which snowmobile trail grooming is proposed. The proposed activities would not remove or affect perching or overnight roosting sites for migrating birds or interfere with foraging efforts.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action will have no effect on the peregrine falcon or its habitat. This determination is based on: 1) no known or suspected nesting sites are present within the project area, 2) potential nesting sites would not be affected, and 3) habitat for migrating birds would still be available within the project area.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the peregrine falcon. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Gray Wolf

Description of Population and Habitat Status

In 1987, the USFWS released a Recovery Plan for the wolf. The plan delineated three recovery zones within Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Of the three, only the Northwest Montana Recovery Area is located on the Kootenai National Forest, and then only on the Fortine District. The northwest boundary of the recovery area is adjacent to the Rexford District (USFWS, 1987), and is about 20 air miles from the proposed project area at the closest point.

Occasional sightings of wolves have been documented over much of the district, and have been increasing in recent years. A report of 2 wolves in the Little North Fork drainage was received in the fall of 1986 from a hunter and the tracks were observed and photographed the next day by the district wildlife biologist. Wolves have been reported both north and south of the proposed project area on the Rexford Ranger District. A radio-collared wolf from the North Fork of the Flathead dispersed to an area west and north of the compartment, and ranged over a large area before being killed in 1989. Wolves are known to travel great distances during pack dispersal or prey searches, and are likely found at one time or another within the boundaries of the Project Area. Individuals are believed to be migrants dispersing from packs in Canada, however, active packs in the northern Flathead River and Fortine Ranger District also provide transients that could be found in the Project Area. No full time pack activity or den site is known or suspected to occur on the Rexford Ranger District at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

The proposed project area is not within designated wolf recovery zones, however, since they likely occur, potential effects on wolves will be discussed for the project area.

In general, recovery management of wolf habitat is associated with the availability of natural prey and minimal contact with human activity. Key habitat components for wolves are: 1) a sufficient, year-round prey base for big game or alternate prey, 2) suitable and somewhat secluded denning and rendezvous sites, and 3) sufficient space with minimal exposure to humans (USFWS, 1987). A variey of big game species (mule deer, white-tailed deer, moose and elk) that would serve as prey for wolves inhabit the project area on a seasonal or year-long basis. Big game animals typically migrate from summer range in the upper elevations of the Project Area to winter ranges located on the lower slopes along Lake Koocanusa and along the mainstem of Big Creek.

1. Prey Base

The primary role of the Forest Service in providing suitable prey is to provide habitat for the big game (prey) population. Management for big game includes providing a sustainable cover and forage level, keeping forest openings to 40 acres or less, and maintaining a maximum open road density (ORD) of 0.75 miles of open road per square mile of area in big game summer ranges (Management Area 12 in the Kootenai Forest Plan).

Cover/Forage Levels

The proposed activities would not change the existing cover and forage within the project area. Snowmobile trail grooming would be confined to existing roadways. Off-trail use by snowmobiles would not change the vegetative components of cover or forage.

Forest Opening Sizes

The proposed activities would not affect forest opening size.

Open Road Densities

This item is designed to address open road densities in big game summer range, therefore it is not applicable to these proposed activities which would occur only during the winter.

However, open road density on big game winter range could affect big game. The proposed actvities would not change the winter open road density because the only road through winter range is already managed as an open road.

2. Denning and Rendezvous Sites

There are no known denning or rendezvous sites within the project area. There are suitable sites within the project area but the low level of wolf activity suggests that no rendezvous or den site is present.

Habitat suitable for denning or rendezvous sites would remain available similar to the present situation. The proposed grooming would not directly affect potential sites. All the roads proposed for grooming are currently open to snowmobiling and receive varying amounts of use, so the indirect effects of displacement of wolves due to snowmobile use would be similar to the present situation.

3. Risk of Mortality

Activities such as the proposed snowmobile trail grooming and the associated increase in snowmobile use of the area have the potential to increase mortality for wolves simply due to an increase in human presence. Most human-caused mortalities result from mistaken identity or from personal conflict/dislike of wolves.

The proposed activities are not expected to significantly increase the risk of mortality for wolves. All of the roads proposed for grooming are currently open to snowmobile use and receive varying but generally light

use. Grooming the roads is expected to increase use, but the chance of increased wolf/human interactions is slight. Suitable big game prey is normally only available on the winter range along the lower mainstem of Big Creek and would not be present on most of the project area during winter to attract wolves.

Statement of Findings

Implementation of the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the gray wolf or its habitat based on: 1) none of the proposed project is within the recovery zone for gray wolves and no pack activity is known or suspected in the proposed project area, 2) denning and rendezvous sites would remain available, 3) adequate suitable habitat for prey (big game) species would remain following project implementation, and 4) risk of mortality would remain at an acceptable level.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the gray wolf. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Water Howellia

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Water howellia is found in glacial pothole ponds and oxbow sloughs where water is present in the spring, but dries up by late summer. It is generally found in shallow water or on the edges of deep ponds. The ponds are associated with spruce and mixed conifer forests, with deciduous species near the water's edge. Flowers appear from July to August on the water surface. The forest habitats adjacent to approximately half of the known populations have been disturbed by logging and road construction. Studies are currently underway to determine the effect of those activities.

Known populations of this plant are located on the Flathead National Forest in the Swan River drainage and on private lands. No locations have been reported from the Kootenai National Forest, although it is suspected to occur on the Forest.

A few glacial potholes are known to exist within the project area and may provide suitable habitat. Previous sensitive plant surveys done in the project area for other activities have not identified any water howellia.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected.

Habitat suitable for water howellia does not exist on constructed road surfaces. Snowmobiling off groomed trails would not affect potential habitat because the snowpack would protect any plants and the plants would be dormant during the winter also.

Statement of Findings

Project implementation would have no effect on water howellia or its habitat. This finding is based on: 1) previous sensitive plants surveys in the project area have not identified any individuals or populations, 2) suitable habitat does not exist on the constructed roads that would be groomed, and 3) if any habitat or plants were present off the roads, the proposed activities would not affect them since the plants would be protected by a snowpack.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on water howellia. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

White Sturgeon

Management Goals and Objectives

Presently, there is no ESA species Recovery Plan for the Kootenai River white sturgeon. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to list the species without a critical habitat designation (Smith, 1993). The Kootenai Forest Plan (USDA, 1987) and DRAFT KNF Sensitive Fish Conservation Assessment (Perkinson, 1991) only contain general objectives for fish habitat conservation. There is no Forest Service habitat management plan, guide or standards for the Kootenai River white sturgeon. Thus, there are no Federal or State recovery or management goals and objectives for protection or restoration of white sturgeon habitats on (or affected by management of) the Kootenai National Forest.

Despite the present policy shortcomings, the Kootenai National Forest must implement a conservation program that promotes federal and state recovery objectives for the Kootenai River white sturgeon. Management of Forest habitats, and individual and cumulative activities that are authorized, funded, or carried out by the Forest, must contribute to an overall improvement in the species' status as required by the Endangered Species Act regulations (ESA, 1973 as amended, 50 CFR parts 17, 226 and 402).

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Potential habitat for Kootenai River white sturgeon includes waters flowing through the Kootenai National Forest. The white sturgeon is restricted to 168 miles of the river between Cora Linn Dam in Canada and Kootenai Falls in Montana. They migrate freely throughout the area (Andrusak, 1980), but are uncommon upstream of Bonners Ferry, Idaho (Apperson and Anders, 1991, Graham, 1981). There are no published reports of sturgeon using lateral tributaries in Idaho or Montana (Partridge, 1983), but at least one layperson account of a sturgeon in a lateral (KNF) tributary in 1989 suggests they may rarely forage outside the river if not actually rear there. Approximately 45 percent of the known potential habitat on the Forest is under joint State/Federal management - the remainder is affected by private and corporate landuses.

There are approximately 880 white sturgeon in the Kootenai River stock. The actual number of fish is thought (95% probability) to be between 638 and 1,211 fish (Apperson and Anders, 1991). This equates to an average abundance of roughly eleven fish per mile of river below Bonners Ferry. Above Bonners Ferry there are very few fish - in 1980 Graham (1981) estimated only 1 to 5 individuals, and recent census work has captured only 1 individual (D. Skarr, personal communication with D. Perkinson, Forest Fisheries Biologist). Based on the above, we assume there are at least several white sturgeon individuals, and spawning habitat for this stock, that may be affected (either indirectly or cumulatively).

The Kootenai River white sturgeon stock can be considered functionally non- viable due to evidence that it is not self-sustaining. Approximately eighty percent of the population exceeds twenty years of age (Apperson, 1992), and the stock has produced virtually no young since 1974 (Partridge, 1983, Apperson and Anders, 1991). Annual recruitment of new fish to the population was intermittent and possibly decreasing as early as the mid-1960's (Partridge, 1983). Based on several census estimates, the Kootenai River white sturgeon population is declining in number by about 4 percent annually and may reach senescence in a few decades. Apperson (1992) believes this stock will decline to less than 100 individuals within fifty-five years.

The ecology of the Kootenai River stock of white sturgeon is not as well known as other Columbia River stocks. The Kootenai River population is a unique stock with roughly two-thirds the genetic diversity of other white sturgeon populations (Bartley et.al., 1985, Setter and Brannon, 1990). The local stock has been isolated from other populations for up to 10,000 years (Apperson and Anders, 1991), and is one of 18 known landlocked white sturgeon populations in western North America. Ecological studies of the Kootenai River population began in the late 1970's, and have accelerated in the last five years. The life history requirements for juvenile and adult sturgeon in the Kootenai River will require further research before comprehensive protection and recovery plans can be drafted.

White sturgeon spawn during spring peakflows when velocities are high and turbidity is elevated. The fertilized eggs sink to the bottom, and then hatch within a few weeks. The newly hatched sac-fry briefly drift with the current before retreating into the substrate for up to a month. The juveniles eventually emerge from the bottom and begin a free-roaming life. Older white sturgeon are relatively sedentary in the deepest

locations in the Kootenai drainage, often selecting waters more than 20 feet deep with low velocities. They are opportunistic feeders, and subsist on insects, clams, snails and fish at a minimum. Kokanee from Kootenay Lake were once an important prey item prior to the collapse of the salmon fishery in the mid-1970's.

Operation of Libby Dam is considered the primary cause for the white sturgeon decline (Holton, 1980, Apperson and Anders, 1991). Changes in the annual hydrograph (magnitude and timing of flows) have eliminated the spring (May to July) high flows required for successful reproduction, produced large daily and weekly flucuations in discharge that degrade habitat potential and increase mortality risks, and modified the annual thermal regime that sturgeon use (in part) as cues for spawning. Elimination of juvenile rearing habitat in Idaho due to agricultural diking and bank stabilization may also be adversely affecting juveniles because the sloughs and side channels were important rearing and foraging habitat for young sturgeon and their prey (Partridge, 1983). Mining pollution (copper) and other chemical pollutants (lead, zinc, vermiculite, PCB's and organochlorides) are suspected to be potential threats to sturgeon reproduction (Apperson, 1992, Partridge, 1983). Some evidence of declining Kootenai River and Kootenay Lake productivity (Daley et.al., 1981) due to pollution abatement and dam operations has led to speculation that population recovery will be inhibited as a result, but the degree of threat that water quality represents is unknown.

Non-point forestry effects have not been identifed as a factor in the decline of the Kootenai River white sturgeon stock. However, the direct and indirect effects of timber harvest and interrelated and interdependent actions can influence the magnitude and timing of peak streamflows (Harr, 1981). Forestry and related actions can also affect stream temperatures, and nutrient and sediment loads (Brown and Krygier, 1970; Furniss et.al., 1991; Scrivener, 1982), depending on the magnitude of cumulative actions, the proximity of activities to potentially affected habitat, and a host of other physical characteristics of the environment. Forestry and related activities rarely result in chemical pollution, but could indirectly remobilize materials stored in streambeds due to changes in peakflows. Unless ecological research on juvenile Kootenai River white sturgeon demonstrates a functional linkage between forestry and this fish stock, the primary threats to the species continue to be hydropower-related and outside the scope of this analysis.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Potential effects on white sturgeon would result from activities in Big Creek drainage that result in indirect and cumulative water and sediment changes that affect occupied habitat.

Grooming trails on existing roads would have no measureable effect on water and sediment reaching Big Creek, Koocanusa Reservoir, and the occupied sturgeon habitat in the Kootenai River. No soils would be disturbed and no vegetation would be changed that could affect water yield.

With the predicted lack of change in water yield and sediment, we conclude that no changes in white sturgeon habitat potential would occur. There would be no change in mortality risk, attributable to the proposed actions.

We conclude that there would be no adverse cumulative flow effects on white sturgeon or their habitat due to the proposed project and other activities in the analysis area.

Statement of Findings

Based on the analysis of the proposed federal action, other interrelated and interconnected activities, and the cumulative effect of other non-federal activities within the analysis area, I find that the proposed project would have **NO EFFECT** on the species or its habitat. This determination is based on: 1) the lack of change in water or sediment yield, and 2) the proposed activity is above Libby Dam and any potential effects would be overshadowed by the effects of the dam.

Based on the available information, the proposed actions would have **NO EFFECT** on the viability of the Kootenai River white sturgeon population. Although this stock may be functionally non-viable, the proposed action will neither cumulatively add to, or mitigate, the causal linkage between managed river-flow cumulative effects and sturgeon non-viability (reproductive failure).

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The effects analysis in the Biological Assessment for this project, together with the larger scope of the NEPA effects analysis, identified no adverse cumulative effects on the Kootenai River White sturgeon that are specific to this project. Thus, no mitigation or compensation for white sturgeon adverse effects are required.

SENSITIVE SPECIES ASSESSMENT

PLANTS

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Twenty-two plant species have been documented in or are suspected to occur on the Kootenai National Forest, and could have habitat within the project area (Chadde, 1989; Evenden, 1988; Lesica and Shelly, 1991; MTNHP, 1993). Sensitive plant surveys previously done within the project area have not located any sensitive plants near the proposed groomed routes.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected.

The proposed grooming and associated snowmobiling would occur on a snowpack and would not affect any sensitive plants if they occur. The probability of any sensitive plants occuring on the roadbed of constructed roads (where the grooming would occur) is extremely low. Snowmobiling off the groomed trails would not affect any sensitive plant because the snowpack would protect any plants and the plants would be dormant during the winter also.

Statement of Findings

Project implementation would have no impact on any sensitive plant species or their habitat. This finding is based on: 1) previous sensitive plants surveys in the project area have not identified any individuals or populations, and 2) if any plants were present, the proposed activities would not affect them since the plants would be protected by a snowpack.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on any sensitive plant species. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

FISH

Bull Trout

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Bull trout are found in cold-water streams, rivers and lakes. They spawn in clear headwater streams with gravel or rubble bottoms, at the tail-end of riffles that contain upwelling currents that produce constant temperatures. Bull trout are very cover-oriented fish and prefer areas with adequate instream and bank structure. They feed primarily on fish, but also take small vertebrates (mice, frogs, ducklings). The young feed on aquatic insects. Activities that affect water quality, especially those that increase sedimentation, and hybridization with brook trout contribute to bull trout population declines.

Populations of the bull trout have been documented in Koocanusa Reservoir, but not in the Big Creek drainage. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks have surveyed the reservoir tributaries and have not reported any spawning locations other than in the Tobacco River, which is over 10 miles from the project area.

Although surveys by State and Federal biologists have failed to identify a population of bull trout in Big Creek, other sources have reported individual bull trout in Big Creek. The use of Big Creek by bull trout is limited to individuals coming out of Koocanusa Reservoir to forage on resident fish in Big Creek, or as

incidental wanderings by sub-adult fish. The mainstem Big Creek from the Little North Fork downstream to the resevoir is presently listed by the State as occupied but not essential bull trout habitat.

No range-wide or Big Creek-specific conservation plan is available for guidance in the conservation of this species. The Kootenai Forest Plan is hereby incorporated by reference (USDA Forest Service, 1987), but it simply directs that we maintain viable populations of native sensitive species where they occur. A Kootenai National Forest Sensitive Species Conservation Plan is circulating internally in a Draft form, but it is not presently applicable direction for the Big Creek bull trout population. Essential habitat for the conservation of bull trout has not been designated as yet.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

Potential effects on bull trout would result from activities in the Big Creek drainage that result in indirect and cumulative water and sediment changes that affect occupied habitat.

Grooming trails on existing roads would have no measureable effect on water and sediment reaching occupied bull trout habitat. No soils would be disturbed and no vegetation would be changed that could affect water yield.

With the predicted lack of change in water yield and sediment, we conclude that no significant changes in bull trout habitat potential will occur. The existing and predicted situation is a change from assumed average conditions, but well within the normal background variability of the natural environment to which bull trout are adapted. There are no anticipated changes in other riparian-dependent (pools, stream temperatures, woody debris, etc.) habitat factors along occupied or potential habitat, and no change in mortality risk, attributable to the proposed actions.

This proposed action, and connected and foreseeable activities, will not cumulatively affect bull trout due to the lack of change that is anticipated.

Statement of Findings

The proposed federal action would have no impact on the bull trout population or its habitat. This determination is based on the lack of change in sediment or water yield from the proposed activities.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the bull trout. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

White Sturgeon

Refer to analysis of white sturgeon under Proposed federal species.

Torrent Sculpin

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Relatively little is known about this sculpin species. They are bottom dwellers that hide under rocks in the riffles of cold, clear streams or rivers, or along the rocky shores of large lakes. They feed on zooplankton and aquatic insect larvae, particularly midges and mayflies. Adults feed on aquatic insects, other invertebrates and fish. Activities that affect water quality, water quantity or sediment loads can affect sculpin habitat. Surveys to date in the Kootenai system indicate sculpins are routinely found in productive habitat of perennial third order or larger streams that are at least eight feet average width during lowflow conditions. The bottom substrate must be a mix of gravels and cobbles with low surface fine sediment embeddedness. Summer baseflow daytime high temperatures apparently must be in the mid-50's to mid-70's to support reproduction. The quality of the stream substrate condition appears to be the critical factor in maintaining a viable population of sculpins.

In Montana, the torrent sculpin is found only in the Kootenai River system, and it is present in the Big Creek watershed. In 1991 a contract sculpin survey found torrent sculpins in the lower Big Creek system near FDR 228. The abundance and population conditions for the Big Creek system are unknown. Informal observations during recon surveys near Lake Koocanusa suggest the torrent sculpin is common in the lower portion of Big Creek. The only information available on torrent sculpins concerns the rough distribution across the Kootenai National Forest, so whether the Big Creek population is unique in some way is unknown.

There is no range-wide or Big Creek-specific conservation plan available as guidance in the conservation of this species. This is primarily the result of a lack of information on the distribution and ecology of this species. The Kootenai Forest Plan is hereby incorporated by reference (USDA Forest Service, 1987), but it simply directs that we maintain viable populations of native sensitive species where they occur. A Kootenai National Forest Sensitive Species Conservation Plan is circulating internally in a Draft form, but it is not presently applicable direction for the Big Creek torrent sculpin population. Essential habitat for the conservation of torrent sculpins has not been designated as yet, but recon surveys in 1991 indicate this species is widely distributed and relatively abundant in major streams of the Kootenai River basin.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

Potential effects on torrent sculpin would result from activities in the Big Creek drainage that result in indirect and cumulative water and sediment changes that affect occupied habitat.

Grooming trails on existing roads would have no measureable effect on water and sediment reaching occupied torrent sculpin habitat. No soils would be disturbed and no vegetation would be changed that could affect water yield.

With the predicted lack of change in water yield and sediment, we conclude that no significant changes in sculpin habitat potential will occur. The existing and predicted situation is a change from assumed average conditions, but well within the normal background variability of the natural environment to which torrent sculpin are adapted. There are no anticipated changes in other riparian-dependent (pools, stream temperatures, woody debris, etc.) habitat factors along occupied or potential habitat, and no change in mortality risk, attributable to the proposed actions.

This proposed action, and connected and foreseeable activities, will not cumulatively affect torrent sculpin due to the lack of change that is anticipated.

Statement of Findings

The proposed federal action would have no impact on the torrent sculpin population or its habitat. This determination is based on the lack of change in sediment or water yield from the proposed activities.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the torrent sculpin. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

WILDLIFE

Coeur d'Alene salamander

Description of Population and Habitat Status

This salamander is found below 5000 feet in elevation in three main habitats: spring seeps, waterfall spray zones and streamsides of small cascading creeks. They occur in wet, humid, and cool micro-habitats containing fractured bedrock or gravel that provides shelter and retains moisture. Dense tree canopy over cascading creek sites moderates surface and water temperatures. They feed on aquatic or semi-aquatic

insects, especially fly larvae. The salamander is sensitive to removal of overstory vegetation, increased water temperature, changes in water flow or level, and physical disturbance of the rocky substrate.

This salamander has been found on the Rexford District in rocky seep areas along Koocanusa Reservoir.

Surveys for this salamander in the project area have been done previously for other projects and have not located any populations or individuals. Potential habitat does exist in a few places where falls or cascades create spray zones over suitable substrate.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect or cumulative effects would be expected.

No habitat exists on the road surfaces proposed for grooming. Any snowmobile use off the groomed trails is unlikely to occur on potential habitat (falls or cascades), but if any did occur the snow pack would protect the habitat. Also, during the winter, salamanders are hibernating well below the ground surface.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action would have no impact on the Coeur d'Alene salamander or its habitat. This determination is based on: 1) no habitat exists on the road surfaces proposed for grooming, 2) salamanders are hibernating during the winter, and 3) snowmobile use off the groomed roads is unlikly to occur on potential habitat.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects to the Coeur d'Alene salamander. No additional mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is expected to be required.

Harlequin duck

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Breeding habitat for the harlequin duck consists of dense high-quality riparian vegetation along isolated, low-gradient (less than 3 degrees) mountain streams. Dense, shrubby riparian areas with woody debris for nesting and brood rearing are important, as well as log jams and overhanging vegetation for cover and loafing areas. They feed on benthic aquatic insects, including stoneflies, mayflies, caddisflies and dipterans, and may also take crustaceans, mollusks and fish. They avoid areas frequented by humans. On wintering grounds, this duck prefers feeding in the surf along rocky ocean shorelines. Because their habitat is so specialized, any activity that affects the availability of aquatic invertebrates, stream flow, water quality or isolation of the breeding territories may affect this duck species.

Surveys by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and the Forest Service personnel in 1990 and 1991 have documented harlequin duck use on Big Creek. Both adults and young were observed.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected.

Harlequin ducks are not present on Big Creek during the winter when the activity is proposed.

The proposed grooming would not take place in potential habitat along Big Creek, and snowmobile use off the groomed trails is unlikely in the dense riparian vegetation that provides potential habitat.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action would have no impact on the harlequin duck or its habitat. This determination is based on: 1) harlequin ducks are not present on Big Creek during the winter, and 2) grooming and off-trail snowmobile use would not effect potential habitat.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no potential adverse effects on the harlequin duck. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is expected to be required.

Boreal owl

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Boreal owls live year-round in mature and old-growth conifer stands above 4500 feet. Territories may be as large as 2200 acres, but only the tree-cavity nest site is defended. Boreal owls feed primarily on red-backed voles, although opportunistic feeding also includes insects, birds, gophers and shrews.

Little is currently known about how management activities affect the owl, however, the nesting owl may be sensitive to to human disturbance. The presence of the owl often goes undetected because of the unaccessibility of their habitat during February and March, the time of the year they respond best to calling.

Potential habitat is present throughout Big Creek drainage above about 4500 feet elevation except where past cutting units have removed potential nest sites. Boreal owls have been documented in the Big Creek draiange in 1991.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive wildlife species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

The proposed activities would have no direct effect on boreal owls or their habitat. No vegetation would be changed that would affect suitable nesting or foraging habitat.

Boreal owls may forage near the edge of forest openings. Snowmobile use could occur off the groomed trails near the edge of forest openings. No information is available to determine the potential effects of snowmobile use at these sites on boreal owls. However, any effects would be expected to be minimal because the low density of owls would create a low probility of an owl using a forest edge at the same time as a snowmobile being there.

The proposed grooming activity and associated snowmobile use would not result in a level of cumulative effects that would affect boreal owls.

Statement of Findings

The proposed federal action may impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for boreal owls.

This determination is based on: 1) no direct effects would occur to any nesting or foraging habitat, 2) indirect and cumulative effects would be minimal.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the boreal owl. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Flammulated owl

Description of Population and Habitat Status

This small owl species inhabits western mountain forests up to 7800 feet in elevation. It prefers open mature ponderosa pine habitat with some undergrowth, but is also found in spruce-fir, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and aspen habitat. The nest site is usually an abandoned flicker or other woodpecker nest or natural cavity. This nocturnal feeder is almost exclusively insectivorous, taking moths, beetles, caterpillars, crickets, spiders and other arachnids, and avoids young dense stands where hunting is difficult. They nest in large diameter snags (>20 inches DBH) with cavities at least as large as a northern flicker cavity. Flammulated owls are migratory and move south in the Fall to central Mexico and Central America, where insects are available during the winter.

Potential habitat exists within the project area, but flammulated owls have not been documented on the Rexford Ranger District to date.

One point near Big Creek was surveyed for flammulated owls in 1992 as part of a larger area survey, but no flammulated owls were located.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Effects, Including Cumulative Effects

The proposed activities would have no direct effect on flammulated owls or their habitat. No vegetation would be changed that would affect suitable nesting or foraging habitat.

No indirect effects would be expected. No snowmobile activity is expected off the groomed trails in the mature to old growth conifer stands that provide potential flammulated owl habitat.

The proposed grooming activity and associated snowmobile use would not result in a level of cumulative effects that would affect flammulated owls.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action would have no impact on flammulated owls or their habitat. This determination is based on: 1) no vegetation would be changed that would affect suitable nesting or foraging habitat, 2) no snowmobile activity would be expected off the groomed trails in potential habitat.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the flammulated owl. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Black-backed woodpecker

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Black-backed woodpeckers are characteristically found in areas supporting numerous dead trees, such as burned-over forests, swamps, or beetle-killed areas. As a cavity nester, they require abundant dead or live trees with heartwood rot, and feed by peeling bark off dead conifers to get at the larvae of wood-boring

beetles, which make up about 75% of their diet. Optimal habitat is provided by Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine or western larch snags, but also utilize other species such as lodgepole pine.

Densities of this woodpecker species are very low, and there is little information on populations within the Northern Rockies. The low densities are likely due to loss of habitat, such as harvesting forests without snag retention, suppression of fires which create snags, rapid harvest of large areas when wildfires do occur, and small-scale salvage of trees killed by heat or "slopovers" of prescribed burning.

On the Rexford Ranger District, black-backed woodpeckers will most likely be found in lodgepole stands where mountain pine beetle infestation has resulted in large areas of dead lodgepole, or in burned areas (wild fires, escaped or slopover slash burns) where a large number of dead trees were created.

Suitable habitat for black-backed woodpeckers is present in the proposed project area and individuals have been documented.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected.

The proposed grooming would not remove any suitable habitat and suitable habitat is not good for snowmobiling due to the density of trees. Snowmobile use off the groomed trails is not expected to occur in suitable black-backed woodpecker habitat for this reason.

The proposed grooming activity and associated snowmobile use would not result in a level of cumulative effects that would affect black-backed woodpeckers.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action would have no impact on black-backed woodpeckers and their habitat. This determination is based on the fact that suitable specific habitat (concentrations of dead trees) would not be affected by the proposed activities.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the black-backed woodpecker. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is required.

Townsend's big-eared bat

Description of Population and Habitat Status

This bat requires key roosting habitat associated with caves or tunnels, although it will also inhabit cliffs, tree cavities or abandoned buildings. Big-eared bats are insectivores, feeding primarily on moths, and use echolocation to find their prey. Foraging areas appear to be limited to forested areas or forest edges. They are extremely sensitive to human disturbance and have been known to permanently abandon roost sites as a result of disturbance.

The proposed project area does not contain key roosting habitat such as caves, tunnels or buildings. However, because roosting has been documented in tree cavities and crevices in cliffs or rock outcrops, it is possible that the bat may occur in the project area since these habitats do occur. Bats require sites where they can maintain thermal levels without significant energy expenditure. If trees are used, it is likely that the largest trees would be chosen because of their greater insulating effects. In the project area, most of the larger trees occur within the mixed conifer sites, however, some large trees occur within lodgepole stands. No surveys have been done to confirm the presence of this species, and no populations are known to exist in the area. If this species of bat does occur within the project area, populations are likely to be low.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

The proposed action would not affect key summer roosting or hibernation habitat associated with caves, tunnels, or buildings.

No winter hibernation sites for bats are known or suspected within the project area. Bats would not be foraging in the project area during the winter.

The proposed action would not affect potential summer roosting sites in trees or foraging sites because no vegetation would be changed.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action would have no impact on Townsend's big-eared bats or their habitat. This determination is based on: 1) no winter hibernation sites are known or suspected, 2) potential summer foraging and roosting habitat would not be changed.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects
The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the Towsend's big-eared bat. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is expected to be required.

Fisher

Description of Population and Habitat Status

Fishers are secretive nocturnal dwellers of mature forests and prefer large areas of undisturbed wildlands. They will actively avoid openings such as meadows, grasslands and clearcuts especially during winter. The fisher is a predator that feeds mostly on small mammals such as snowshoe hares, squirrels, porcupines, shrews and mice, although carrion, fish, birds, insects, herptiles, eggs, fruit and plant material may be eaten. Home ranges occupy 6-15 square miles, and may be even larger in the winter when food is scarce. Optimal habitat appears to be large, suitable areas of 245 acres or more, interconnected with other large areas of suitable habitat. Dens consist of rock crevasses or hollow trees or logs. Depleted populations have been attributed to loss of habitat from fragmentation and human disturbance, specifically trapping.

There are no known locations of fishers within the project area, although no specific surveys for fisher have been conducted.

Suitable fisher habitat is found within the project area. The Big Creek riparian zone is probably the largest single block of suitable fisher habitat within the project area.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

No direct effects on habitat would occur. The proposed activities would not affect the vegetative components of fisher habitat. Grooming would be confined to currently existing roads.

Trapping has been identified as one factor in depleted populations. Roads increase the ease of access to fisher habitat. Although no new roads would be built, grooming would increase the ease of access during the trapping season. Currently, trappers can use all the roads proposed for grooming, but they have to break their own trails. I conclude that since trappers can already access the same roads, grooming would not significantly increase trapping pressure.

Statement of Findings

The proposed Federal action may impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for fishers. This determination is based on: 1) no direct effects on fisher habitat would happen, and 2) trapping pressure would not significantly increase.

Potential Measures for Removing, Avoiding, or Compensating for Adverse Effects

The analysis performed in conjunction with this Biological Evaluation identified no adverse effects on the fisher. No mitigation or compensation for adverse effects is expected to be required.

Lynx

Description of Population and Habitat Status

The lynx is a forest dwelling species that feeds primarily on snowshoe hares and other small mammals or birds. It is solitary and nocturnal in nature, and dens in hollow logs, beneath root wads or in other sheltered places. They do appear to have cyclic populations, peaking every 9-10 years, and paralleling snowshoe hare cycles.

Lynx were historically found in all of the major drainages on the district, but it is not known how many if any are still present. Lynx are considered a general forest dwelling species, but they are closely tied to their main food source--snowshoe hares. Snowshoe hares tend to be associated with dense shrub understories. Early seral stages of forests or habitat types with shrub understories provide snowshoe hare habitat. Older forest stands provide suitable habitat for lynx denning, resting, and other prey species. Lynx populations are vulnerable to trapping and roads generally provide the main access into lynx habitat.

Although none have been documented recently, it is possible that lynx do still occur in the project area.

The project area contains suitable lynx habitat. Past roading and harvest activities have fragmented the forest and provided easy access for trappers. Currently approximately 70+% is in a forested condition that is considered big game hiding cover. While this does not relate directly to lynx habitat, it gives an indication that overall the project area provides a forested habitat that lynx could use to varying degrees.

The Forest Plan does not contain direction for sensitive species and no Conservation Plans exist at this time.

Analysis of Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on habitat would occur. The proposed activities would not affect the vegetative components of lynx habitat. Grooming would be confined to currently existing roads. Snowmobile use off the groomed trails would not affect habitat for lynx or potential prey species. The snow pack would protect shorter vegetation and the dense forested areas do not provide good snowmobiling terrain.

Trapping has been identified as one factor in depleted populations. All roads in the project area are currently open for snowmobile use between December 1 and April 30 which includes the trapping season. Roads increase the ease of access to lynx habitat. Although no new roads would be built, grooming would increase the ease of access during the trapping season. Currently, trappers can use all the roads proposed for grooming, but they have to break their own trails. I conclude that since trappers can already access the same roads, grooming would not significantly increase trapping pressure.

Statement of Findings

The proposed action may impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for lynx. This determination is based on: 1) no direct effects on lynx habitat would happen, and 2) trapping pressure would not significantly increase.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I Record of Informal Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

4/20/93 Lewis Young called Kevin Shelly to ask if they had consulted on snowmobile grooming activities before and if so, what factors were used in the analysis. Potential analysis factors were discussed. Agreed to discuss it further at one of the monthly coordination meetings.

11/30/93 Annie Dueker reviewed draft findings of biological evaluation with Kevin Shelly at monthly coordination meeting in Libby.

Appendix II TES Conservation Measures Implemented to Date on Kootenai National Forest

On file at Kootenai National Forest Supervisor's Office, Libby, Mt.

Keeler Creek
#473

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☐ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☐ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Lincoln County Sno-Kats
Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☐ NO ☒

If yes:

Species _____

1. Winter range _____ (list)

2. Travel corridor _____ (area)

3. Other _____

Suggested alternate route _____

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

☒ Approved ~~with above-mentioned mitigation measures~~

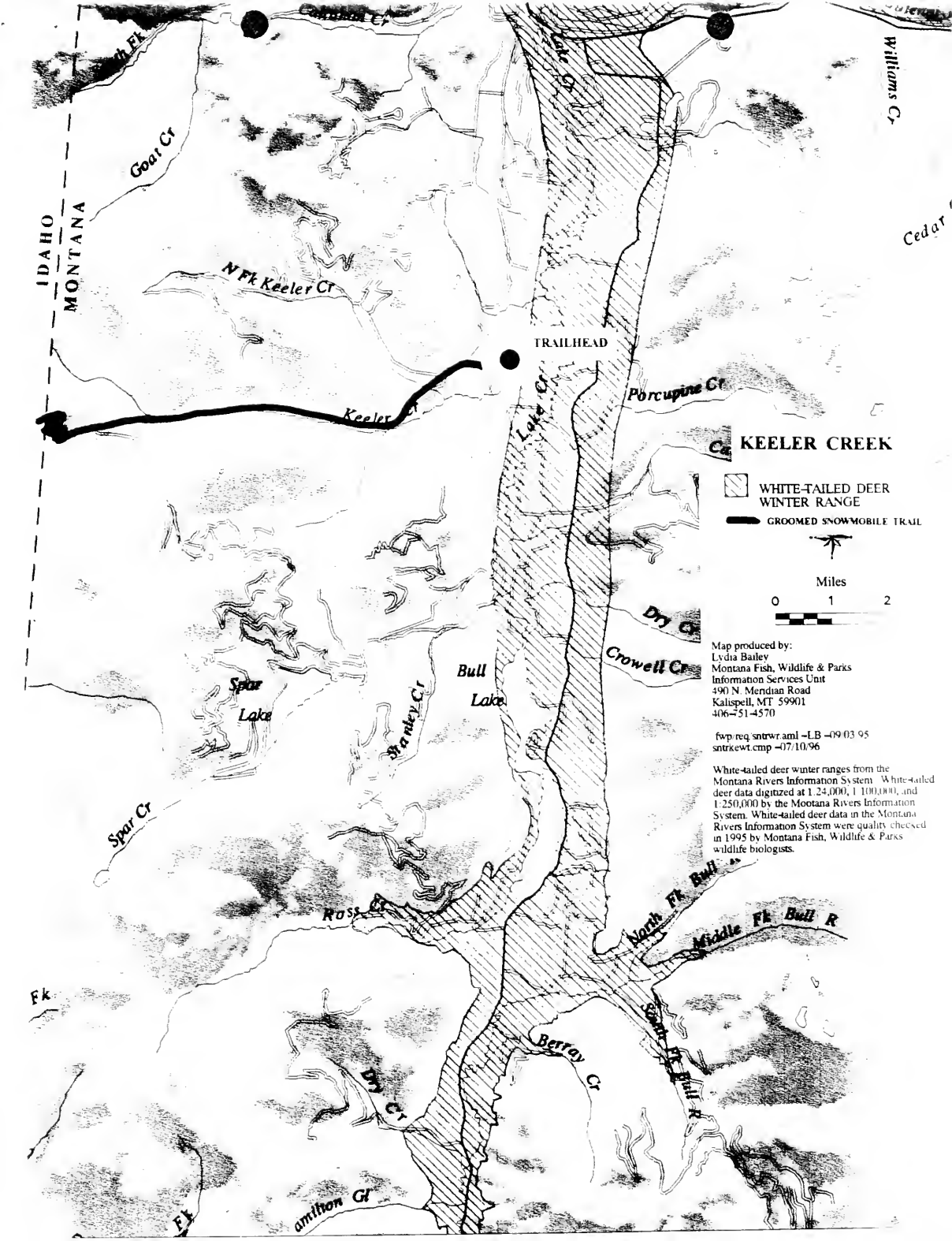
☐ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown
Regional Wildlife Biologist
Date
6/27/96

Date

[signature]
Regional Parks Manager

3/91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WINTER RANGE
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
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Crowell Cr
Bull
Lake
Spar
Lake
Stanley Cr
Spar Cr
Ross Cr
North Fk Bull
Middle Fk Bull R
South Fk Bull R
Berray Cr
Dry Cr
Map produced by:
Lydia Bailey
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Information Services Unit
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4570
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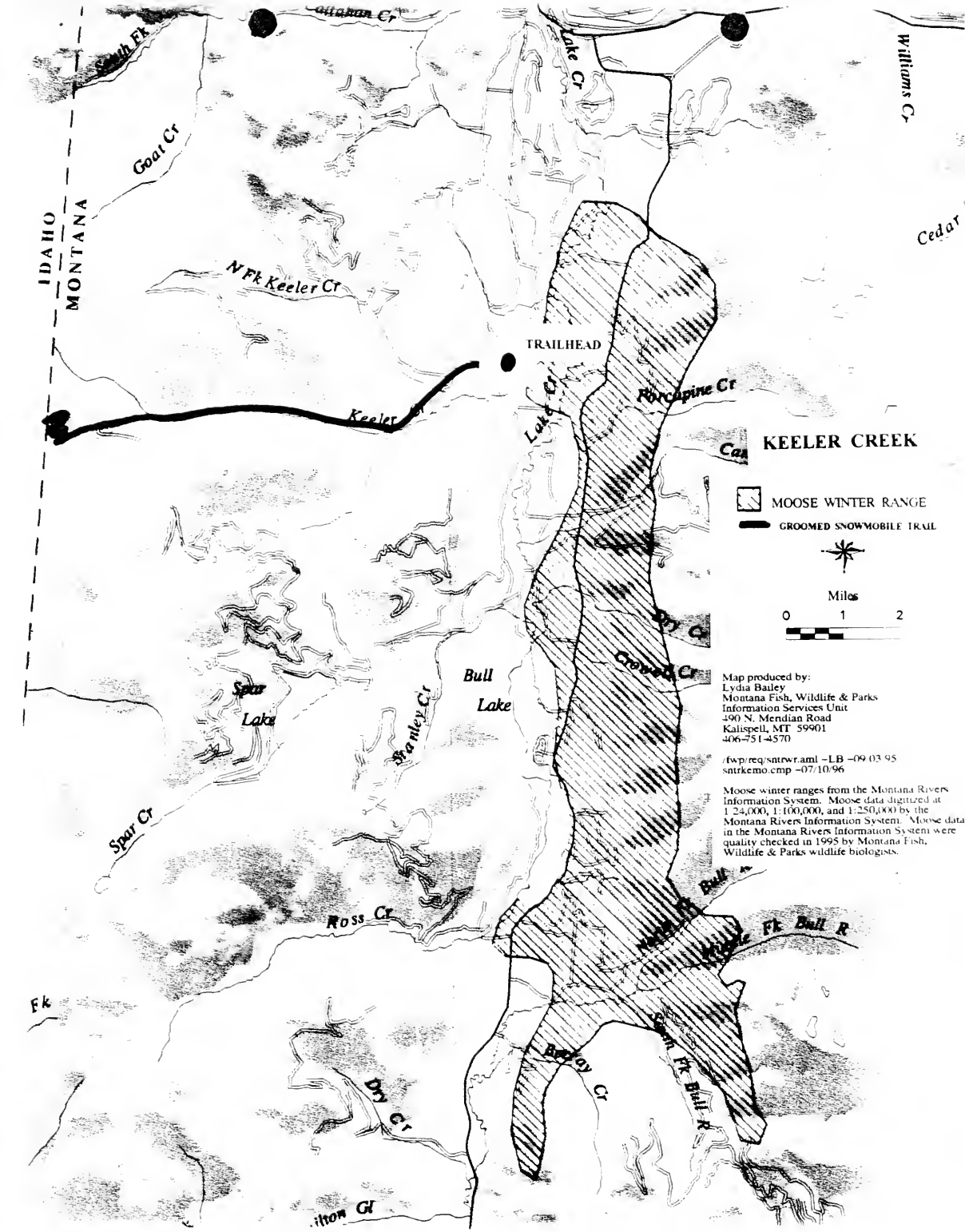
White-tailed deer winter ranges from the Montana Rivers Information System. White-tailed deer data digitized at 1:24,000, 1:100,000, and 1:250,000 by the Mootana Rivers Information System. White-tailed deer data in the Montana Rivers Information System were quality checked in 1995 by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks wildlife biologists.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Ross Cr
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Map produced by:
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Information Services Unit
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Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4570
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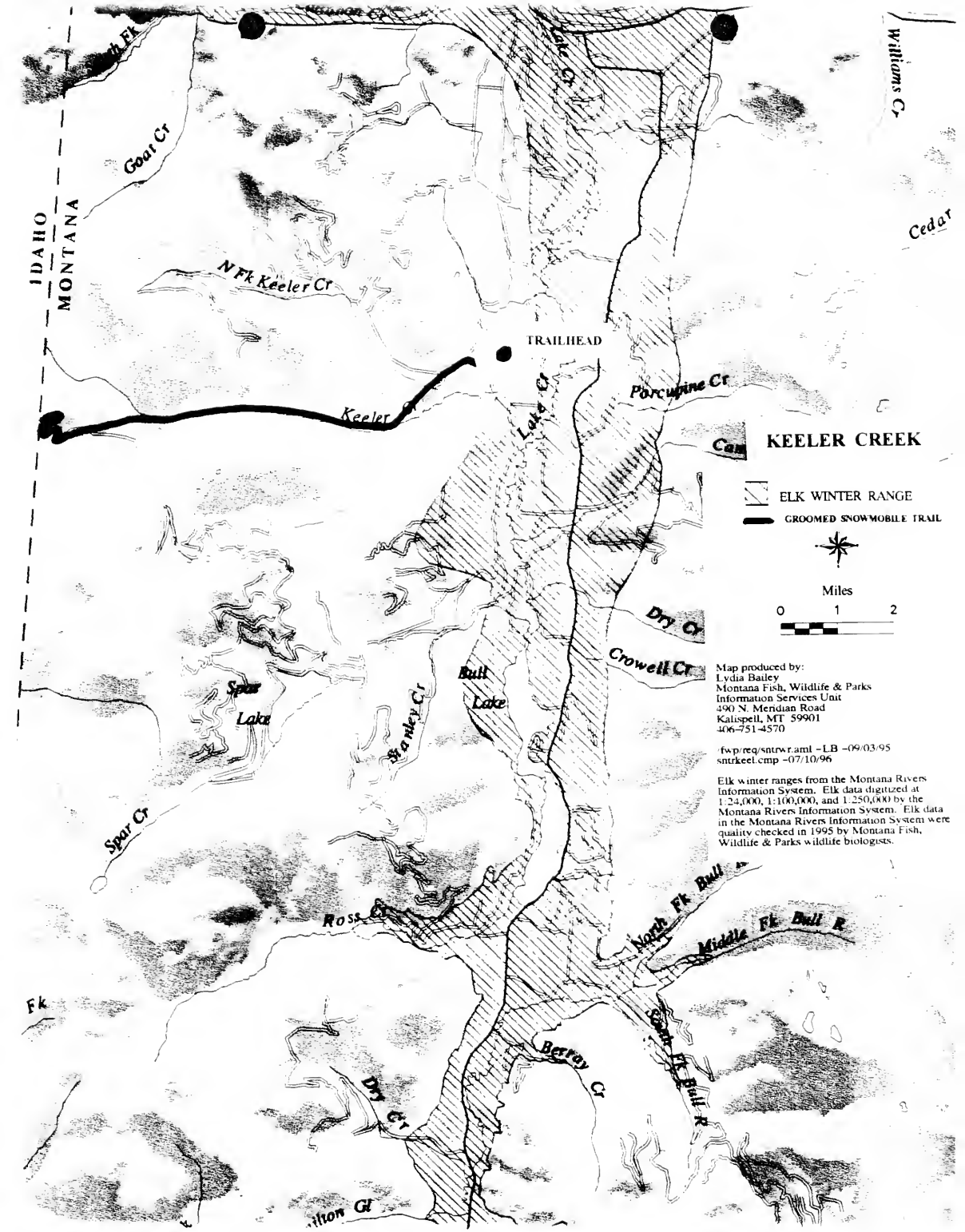
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GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
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Ross Cr
North Fk Bull R
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South Fk Bull R
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Dry Cr
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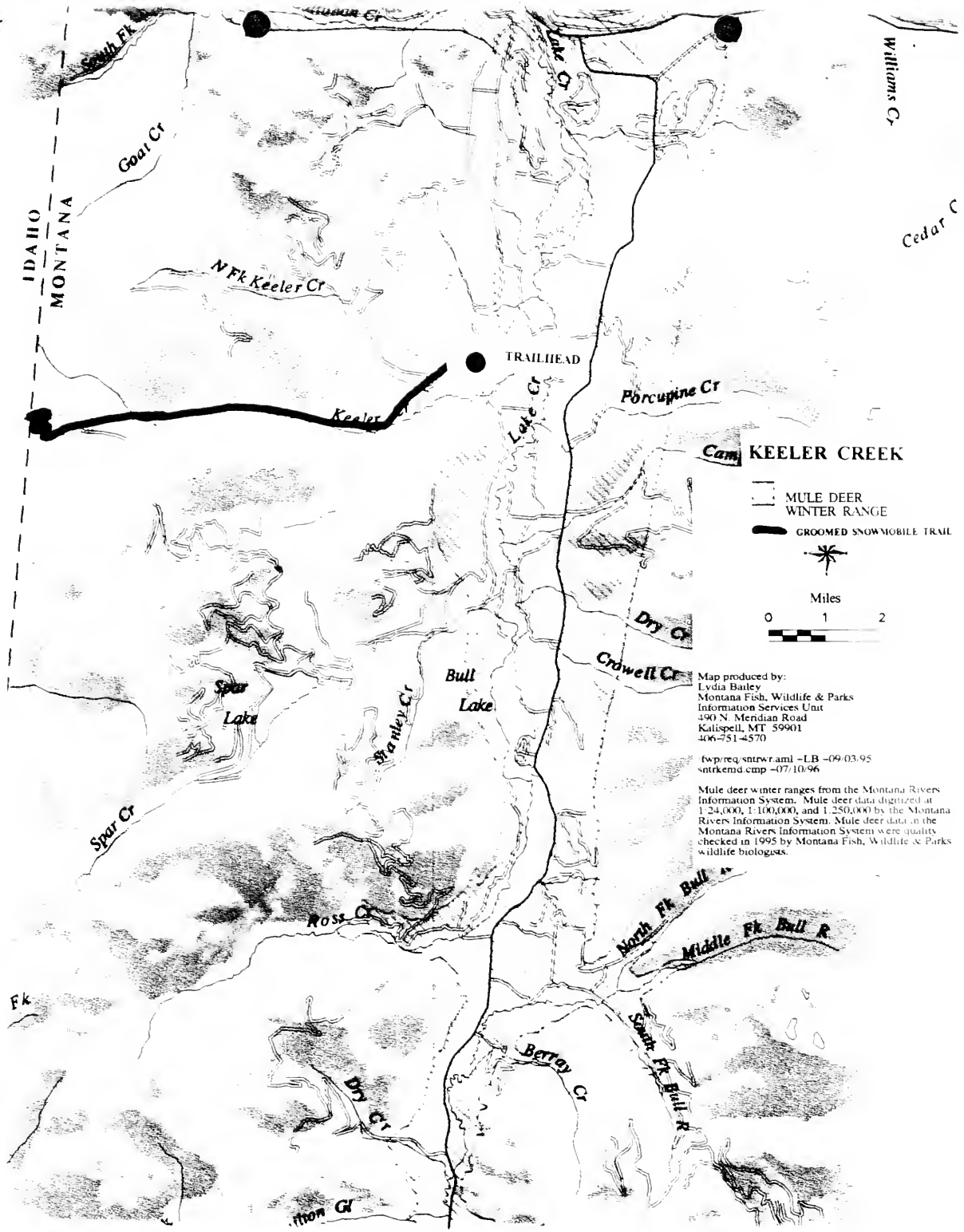

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Lydia Bailey
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Information Services Unit
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
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Mule deer winter ranges from the Montana Rivers Information System. Mule deer data digitized at 1:24,000, 1:100,000, and 1:250,000 by the Montana Rivers Information System. Mule deer data in the Montana Rivers Information System were quality checked in 1995 by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks wildlife biologists.

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

☒ Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)

☐ New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

Pete G. / Spread G. / Hellroaring G.

Snowmobile Club

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES ☐ NO ☒

If yes:

Species whitetail / moose

1. Winter range limited winter range use near the bottom ends of these roads, where they meet Yeak 92- (list)

2. ~~Travel corridor~~ These are generally good snow areas and probably not much of a problem for wildlife- (area)

3. ~~Other~~ We did find Lynx tracks up Hellroaring this winter-

Suggested alternate route

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

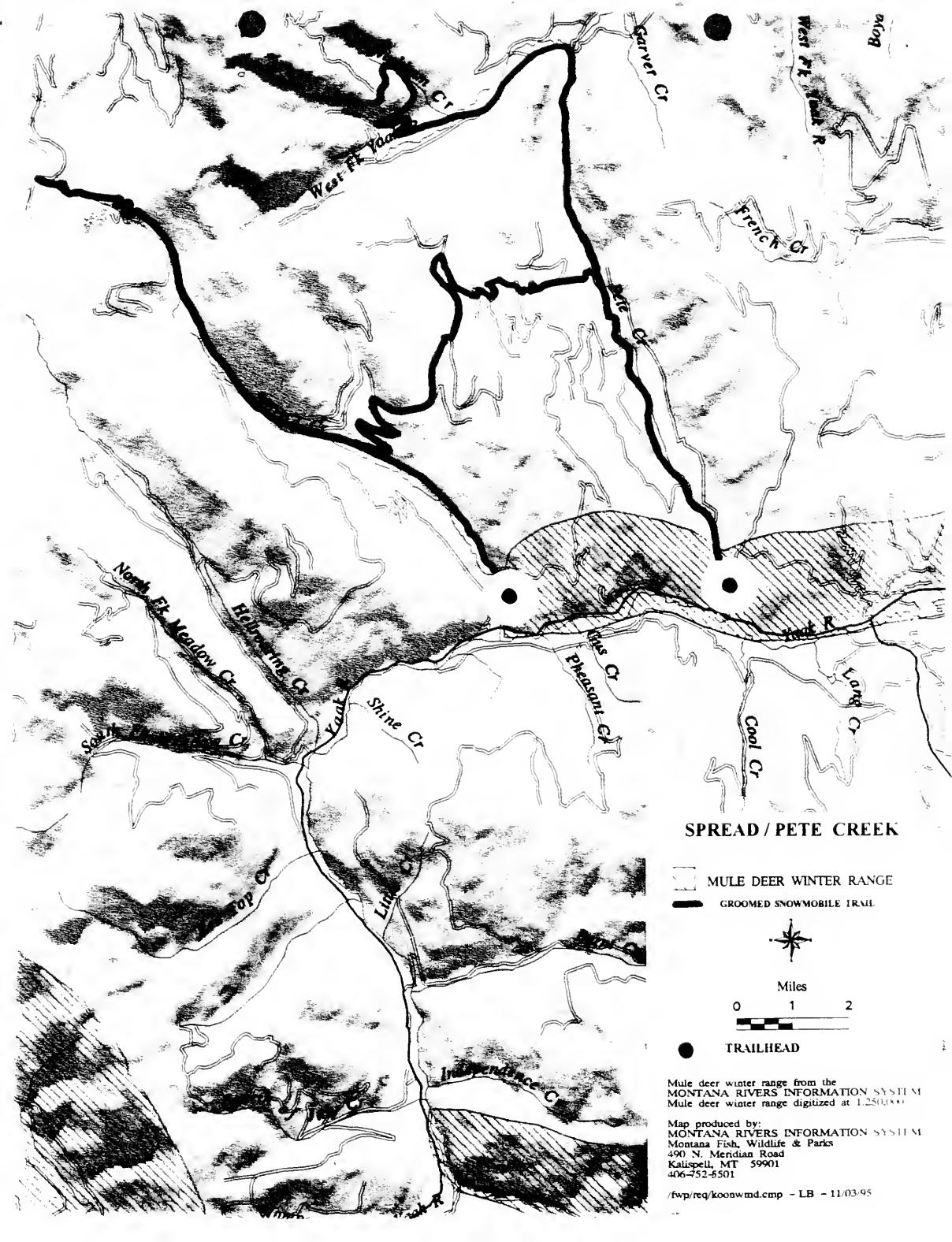
☑ Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures

☐ Not approved as submitted

Jerry Brown 3/1/95

Regional Wildlife Biologist Date Regional Parks Manager

Date HEW



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Boya
West Fk Yaak
French Cr
Pete Cr
North Fk Meadow Cr
Hellroaring Cr
Yaak R
Shine Cr
Pheasant Cr
Cool Cr
Lang Cr
Yaak R
Independence Cr
SPREAD / PETE CREEK
MULE DEER WINTER RANGE
GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
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Mule deer winter range from the
MONTANA RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM
Mule deer winter range digitized at 1:250,000
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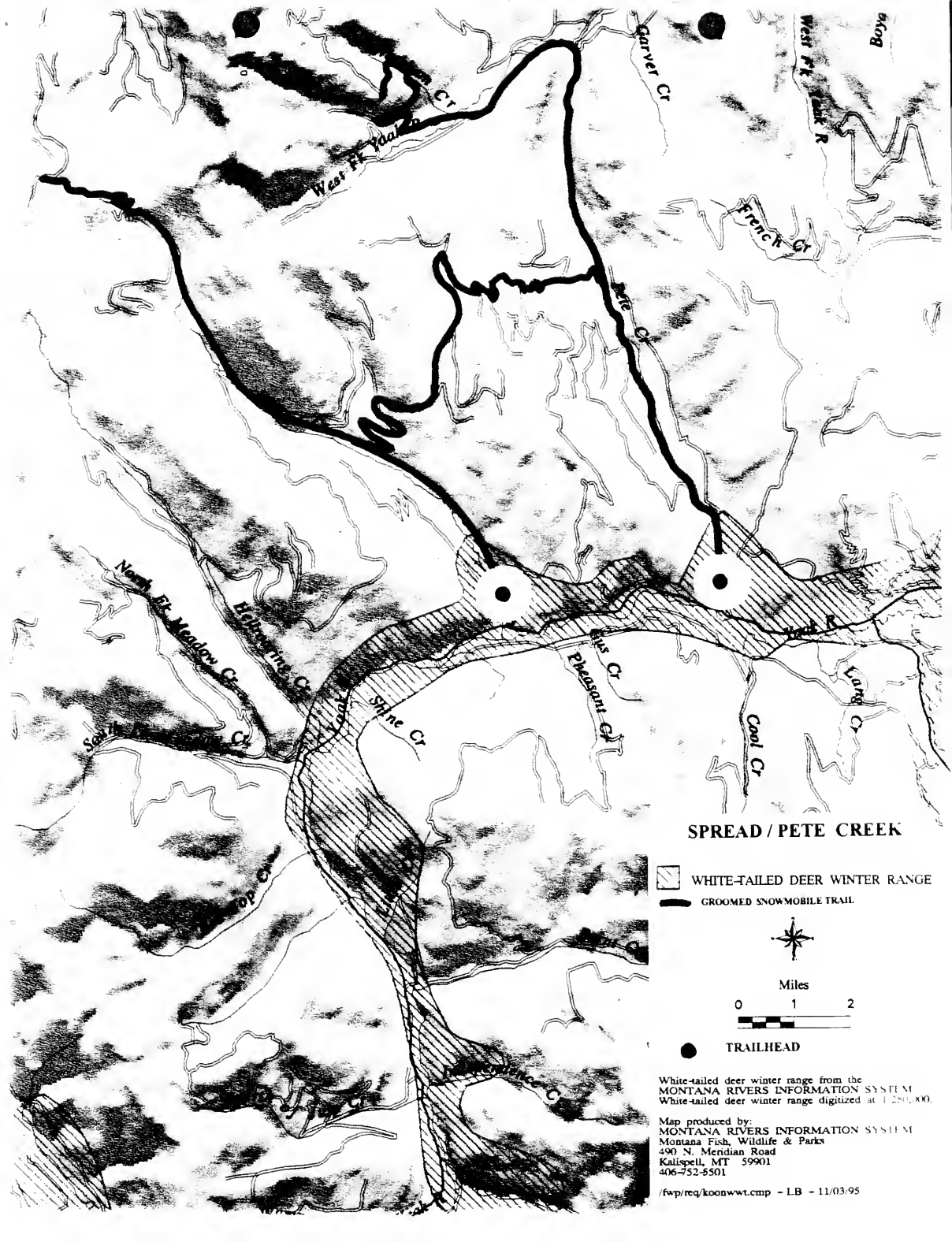

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SPREAD / PETE CREEK
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White-tailed deer winter range from the
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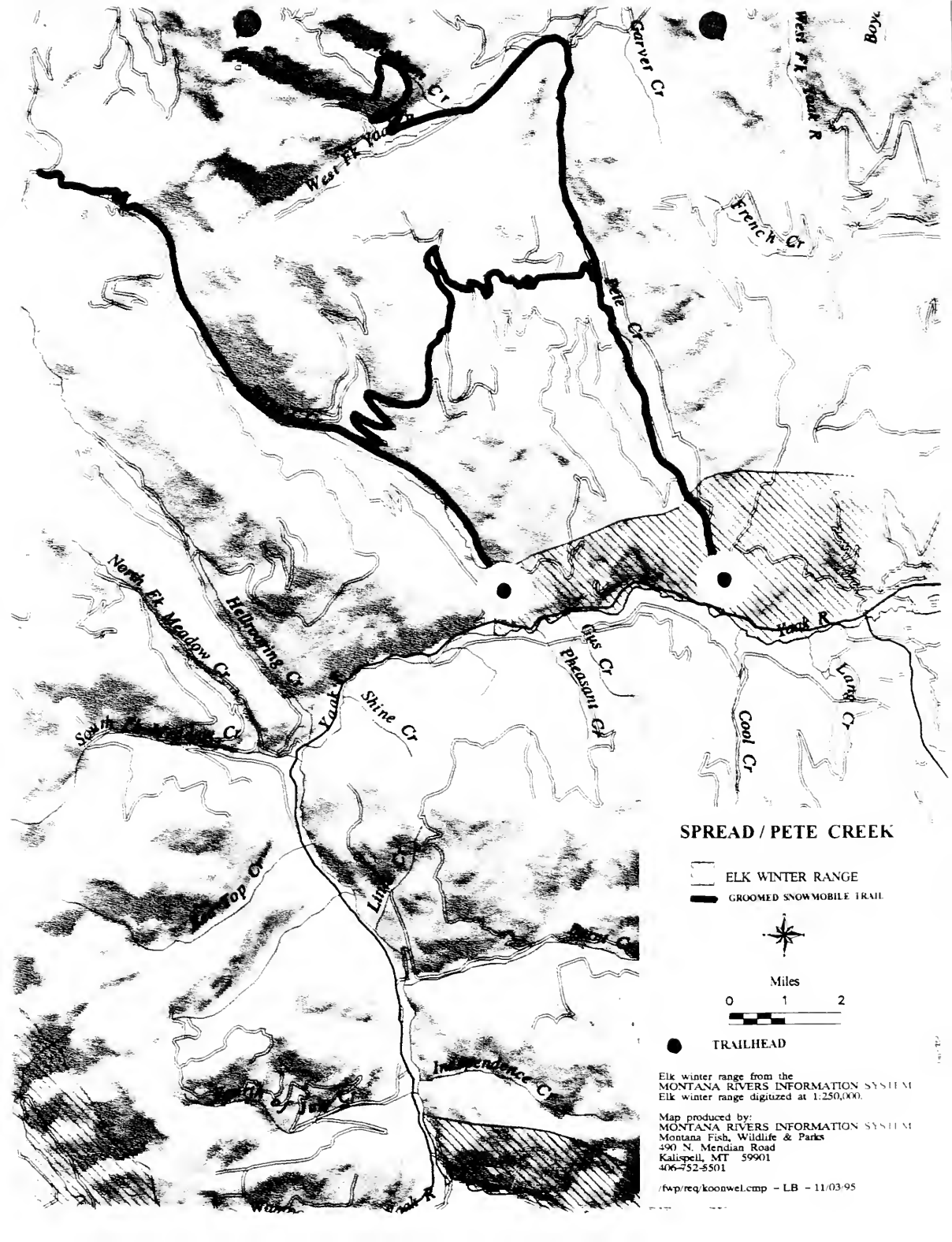

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Shine Cr
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Elk winter range from the
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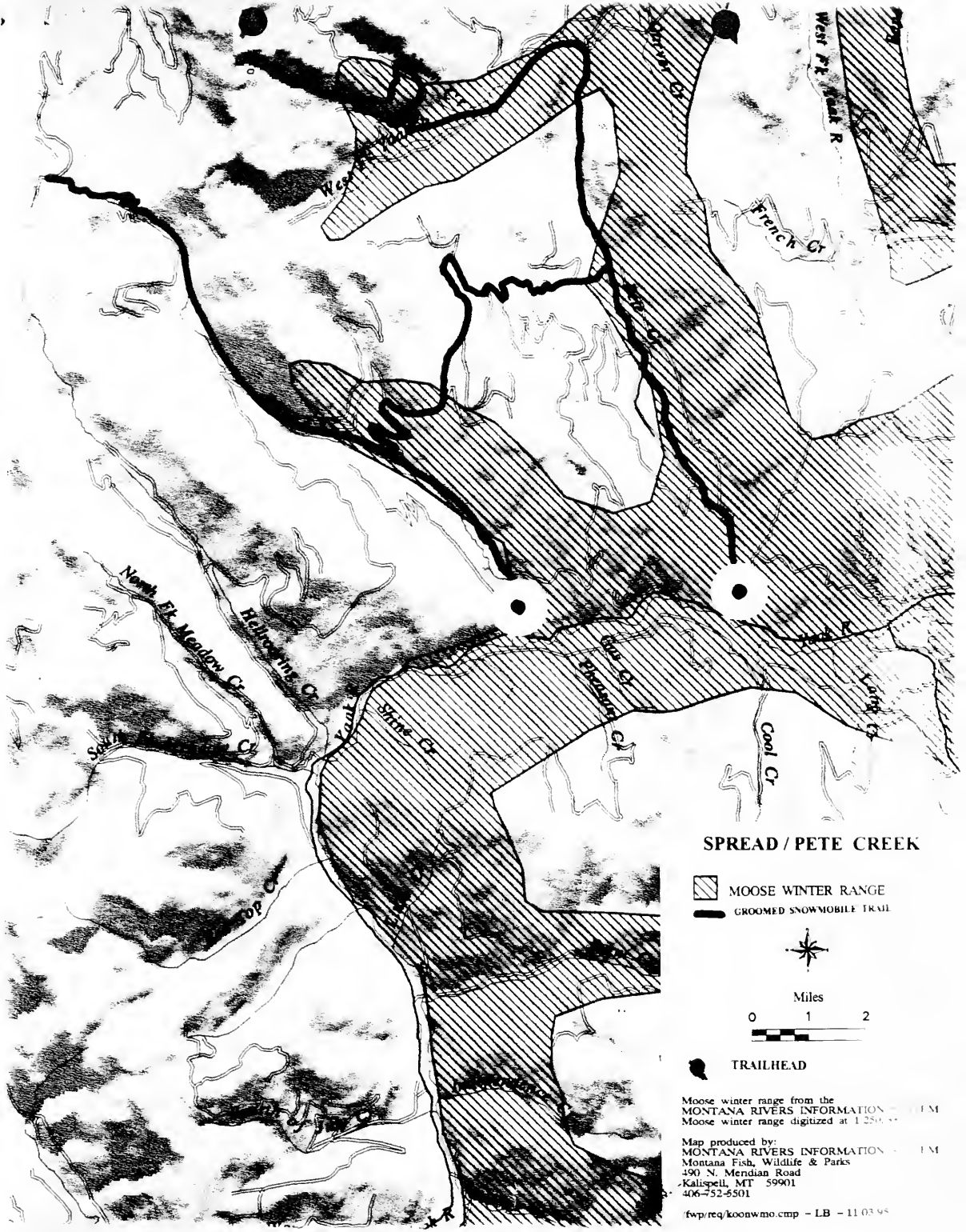
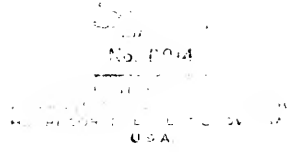
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